Chronicles

March 2005

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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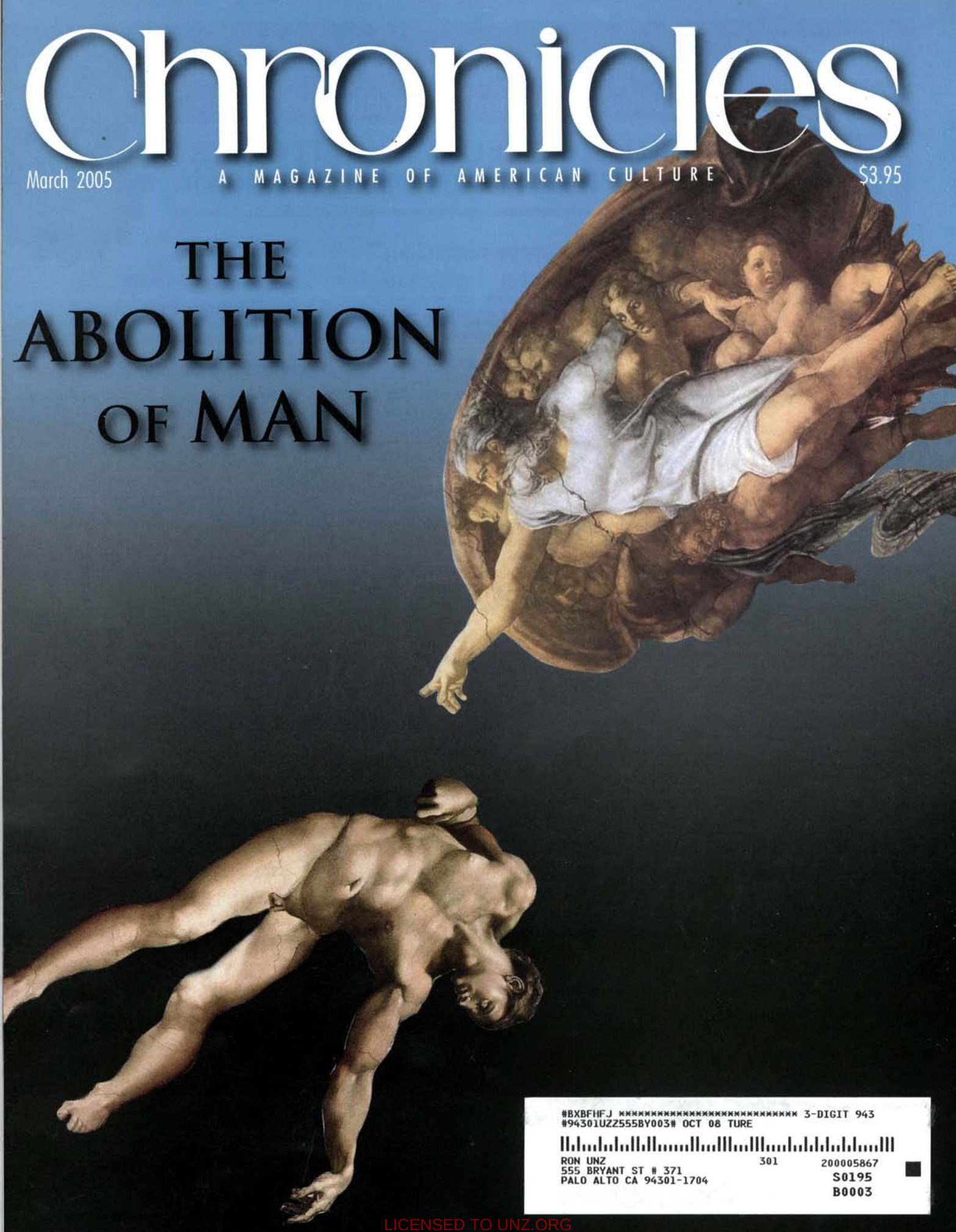

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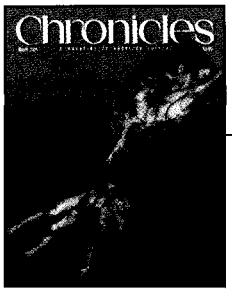

Chronicles

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On Reforming Education

Michael McMahon's otherwise insightful article on the sad state of the public schools in England ("Education and Authority," *Views*, January) is marred by a wrongheaded conclusion. Mr. McMahon avers that the decline in the quality of education in England is the result of education having become a commodity. In his final paragraph, he laments that "Education is no longer a gift to be shared but a commodity to be bought and sold." In actuality, the problem is not that education has become a commodity but that it has ceased to be one.

If the buying and selling of education were the source of the problem, the decline should be manifesting itself more palpably in the private schools than in the public schools. After all, the private schools unabashedly treat education as a commodity, which is purchased by parents for the benefit of their children. In the public schools, however, the free choice that accompanies a private purchase is completely suppressed. Mr. McMahon himself explodes the myth of "choice" in the public-school realm very nicely. He also implies the great superiority of the private schools in England in the first sentence of his article: "I had taught in private schools for years, but I hesitated before entering the classroom to teach my first lesson in the state sector." Why hesitate, unless the inferiority of the public school relative to the private school is already known?

The source of the problem in public education is the same as the source of the problem in the delivery of healthcare and in so many other areas of our society: the dead hand of government bureaucracy ineptly attempting to control and organize a social function that is quite beyond the capacity and legitimate purview of government. Mr. McMahon rightly decries the unholy marriage of government and business and the deleterious effect of this combination on education, but he somewhat leaves the impression that it is business alone that must butt out. Genuine reform can only occur when government, with humility, stops interfering in social functions, such as education, that can only be done properly outside the realm of government control. When education, unashamedly a commodity, is returned to the control of families and local communities—the true consumers—the legitimate authority of teachers as the extension of that of the parent will recover. The free market cannot do all things, but those things it can do, and they are very numerous indeed, cannot be improved upon by government intervention. Unfortunately, this is a lesson that no school, public or private, seems to be able or willing to teach to modern intellectuals.

—John A. Collins
Pembroke Pines, FL

Mr. McMahon Replies:

Redefining education as a commodity does not liberate it; it destroys it. I describe how this happens—and, indeed, how it is happening now—in "The Abolition of Learning" in this issue (p. 14). However, I am grateful to Mr. Collins for providing me an opportunity to expand on one aspect of that destruction. English independent schools have been corrupted by the same materialist values that have been imposed on the schools that are controlled by the government. The people that pay for private schooling are not buying better education; they are paying for their children to be better prepared to take better-paid jobs. The "lesson that no school, public or private, seems able or willing to teach" in England at present is that education is a Good Thing in itself. The problem is not how education is distributed but how education is defined. The heresy that has taken hold is that the purpose of education is to produce economic well-being, so education is described in the language of the economist, using such words as *commodity* and *consumer*. The late MP Enoch Powell called such talk "the sound of barbarism." He described education in rather different terms: "Like all things joyous, beautiful and good, education is self-justified. It not only needs no secondary justification, it actually shrivels at the touch of secondary justification." Comments like his are not frequently heard in today's educational marketplace.

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On Ending "Gay Marriage"

Did I read aright the piece on "Gay Marriage" by Prof. William J. Quirk ("What's Next for the Imperial Judiciary?" *News*, January)? When he puts forth his solution, it turns out to be the passage of a bill that will give the "last word" to "[e]ach state's high court." But as he himself points out earlier on, that will result in courts such as that in Massachusetts forcing "gay marriage" down society's throat! Professor Quirk does add that "Congress, if the states abuse their discretion, can always restore federal jurisdiction," but one court has already abused its discretion! So we are brought back full circle to a constitutional amendment. What else is left?

—Jonathan Chaves
Washington, D.C.

Professor Quirk Replies:

Mr. Chaves is, of course, well intentioned, but, if we follow him, he will lead us off a cliff. The "gay marriage" issue—without a constitutional amendment—is easily winnable. And more than "gay marriage" is involved: We have a good chance at starting to roll back the imperial judiciary.

Mr. Chaves wants a constitutional amendment to bar "gay marriage" in the United States. There are two things wrong with that. The states, not the national government, should define marriage; and in any case, such an amendment, which garnered only 48 votes in the Senate last year, is not going to pass—not this year, not ever. Before an amendment can be sent to the states for ratification, it must pass two thirds of both houses of Congress. The Senate, in recent years, has been the graveyard for amendments concerning term limits, school prayer, flag burning, busing, and a balanced budget. "Gay marriage" will be buried along with the rest. Mr. Chaves needs 67 votes to get past the Senate; the Republicans have 55, and some of them are squishy. Indeed, Karl Rove, after the November election, as much as told *Newsweek*'s Howard Fineman that the Republicans called for a Senate vote last year, knowing it would not pass, in order to embarrass the Democrats by forcing them to take a pro-"gay marriage" position. That may be entertaining, but it does not move the ball down the field.

Mr. Chaves correctly points out that the Massachusetts Supreme Court has ruled that the Massachusetts state constitution requires "gay marriage" in that state. The governor and the people of Massachusetts can deal with their court as they wish, but what they do is no problem for the rest of us, as long as it stays home. The problem is that the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the Constitution requires each state to accept "the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings" of other states. The Supreme Court will find that Illinois must recognize any Massachusetts "gay marriage," imposing it on the other states. That's what happens if we go down Mr. Chaves' road: We end up with a national rule that is the opposite of the one he wants.

What everyone, including Mr. Chaves, should do (as I mentioned in my article) is get behind H.R. 3313, which uses Congress' control over the Supreme Court's jurisdiction to remove "gay marriage" cases from the Supreme Court's docket. This can be accomplished by a simple statute passed by a majority vote of both Houses and signed by the President. The states would then have the final say. Massachusetts could do what it wants, but its "gay marriages" would not be imposed on any other state.

The Greatest Threat to Our Civilization?

Chronicles' Foreign Affairs Editor Srdja Trifkovic believes that the most serious immediate threat to the West is Islam, a teaching that is part religion, part totalitarian ideology, and part blueprint for global conquest. He is not a prophet of doom but a realist who believes that the "War on Terror" is a just and necessary endeavor. But he warns that the war is misnamed: It confuses the jihadist enemy with the terrorist tool. More seriously, it is waged without a proper assessment of the enemy and his beliefs, motives, and past record.

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by Doug Bandow

Free to Leave

The Iraqis have voted. Now, it is time to start bringing home America's troops.

More than 1,400 Americans had died, and nearly 11,000 had been wounded, by the end of January. The war has already cost $200 billion, and the President is asking for another $80 billion.

Yet President George W. Bush refuses to set any timetables. The Pentagon expects to keep 120,000 personnel in Iraq through 2006. Some analysts talk of staying for years.

America's dead "have made the ultimate sacrifice defending freedom," said White House spokesman Scott McClellan. Sadly, however, we know that the war was a mistake, fought on grounds that turned out to be false.

The foundation of the Bush administration's case for war was Iraq's presumed WMD arsenal. But Saddam Hussein's government possessed no such weapons and posed no serious threat to America. Rather than admit error when its WMD claims proved false, the administration seamlessly switched rationales. Although the removal of Saddam Hussein from power was welcome, sacrificing American lives to "promote democracy" was always a dubious justification. Unfortunately, the administration demonstrated both arrogance and incompetence while implementing its occupation policy.

After losing ground for months, White House officials looked hopefully toward the planned January poll as the turning point. Yet after every widely heralded success—the killing of Uday and Qusay Hussein; the capture of Saddam Hussein; the "transfer of sovereignty"—security deteriorated.

In the face of catastrophic failure, the Bush administration has no apparent strategy. Instead, it is attempting to improve its p.r. efforts. Last fall, the Pentagon issued a $17.7 million contract to reach out to Iraqis. The Pentagon also provides media training and "talking-point" cards for Iraq-bound troops.

Bush-administration officials apparently just hoped that things would get better. Alas, the same officials have been proved wrong at virtually every point. They certainly aren't believed by leading Republican legislators. Bush has been "perhaps not as straight as maybe we'd like to see," said Sen. John McCain (R-AZ).

Nor do Iraqi officials offer much cheer. Says Gen. Muhammad Abdullah Shahwani, director of Iraq's intelligence services: "I think the resistance is bigger than the U.S. military in Iraq. I think the resistance is more than 200,000 people." At least 40,000 of them, he believes, are full-time fighters.

So the White House eventually downplayed the election's significance. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said two weeks before the ballot: "Clearly, we don't see the election itself as a pivotal point." Washington has again moved the goalposts.

Most Iraqis view American forces as occupiers, and most want them out. If the newly elected Iraqi government truly represents them, it will demand that Washington go home. Even the President acknowledges that, in that case, America must leave.

If the new regime seems more receptive to the desires of Washington than to those of Iraqis, more Iraqis will support the insurgency; those same Iraqis are likely to work hard to defeat those who now kill and maim only when there is no longer a U.S. presence on which to focus their anger.

Yet President Bush says the troops cannot leave "until we have completed our mission." But victory—if it means a Western-oriented, liberal democratic regime—looks increasingly distant.

In any case, there is no reason to believe that the insurgency will disappear. The affection of Iraqis will not be restored through financial aid or battlefield victories.

Maybe a massive military build-up combined with a willingness to kill as many people as necessary, without wasting much time distinguishing between guilty and innocent, would reestablish order. Former national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski argues that the Bush administration's goals are unattainable unless the United States is willing to "commit 500,000 troops, spend $200 billion a year, probably have a draft." Few Americans seem inclined to bear (and impose) that burden to enforce Washington's will on the Iraqi people.

Admittedly, withdrawal is not a pleasant option. Iraq's government will remain vulnerable, and a civil war may ensue. However, the U.S. presence is an irritant inflaming conflict. If ethnic war erupts, it is better for America to be out rather than in.

Jihadists will paint a pull-out as a defeat for the United States. But a continuing occupation encourages terrorist recruitment. And a panicked retreat later, with U.S. troops under fire, would be worse.

Withdrawal will also leave Iraqis who aided the United States open to retaliation. This is unavoidable. Washington could admit any friendly Iraqis who want to come to America, as it did after the first Gulf War.

The President may counsel patience as he expresses his desire "to spread freedom." But the "pessimists and handwringers," as Bush spokesman Scott McClellan denounced them, have been consistently right. Demagogic attacks on his critics will not salvage Bush's Iraq policy.

Our current policy is unsustainable. The United States must pull out of Iraq. The withdrawal cannot be immediate, but it must be speedy. Even Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld now says that Iraq need not be "peaceful and perfect before we can reduce coalition and U.S. forces." Washington should begin withdrawing its troops, with the goal of a complete departure by the end of the year. The exact time frame is less important than the goal: quickly bringing American personnel home and placing full control of Iraq's destiny in the hands of Iraqis.

"My promise" to those who have lost someone in Iraq "is that we will complete the mission so that their child or their husband or wife has not died in vain," said President Bush. It does no honor to those who have died to throw away more lives in a vain attempt to establish American-style democracy on the Euphrates. The best way to honor America's heroic dead is never again to repeat the Bush administration's misguided rush to war.

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THE TSUNAMI that struck Asia and Africa on St. Stephen's Day wreaked a considerable amount of havoc, but no one knows, even approximately, how many people actually died. In the first few weeks, it looked as if the grisly total would add up to about 150,000 victims, but, as politicians in Indonesia began to see the advantages, the figures have crept up to perhaps 175,000.

Nonetheless, even 150,000 dead in a single day is a horrifying number. People all over the developed world took the news hard, as they stayed glued to CNN, watching for ever more graphic bits of footage, listening for even sadder tales of children snatched from their mothers' arms. "What's it up to now, Charlie?" I can almost hear their wives calling out from the kitchen.

When the tsunami struck, I was in Siena without a television set, and, though I had skimmed the front page of the *Corriere*, I did not grasp the dimensions of the catastrophe until I reached Naples on December 30. In Italy, the New Year's Eve celebrations were supposed to be more muted this year, out of respect for the victims, but the explosions going off in Naples were enough to flatten the tires of parked cars and start trash fires all over the city. If that is Naples' idea of muted, I do not want to be there when they have a really good time.

Some holiday parties in Europe and the United States were cancelled in honor of the event. I do not give or attend New Year's Eve parties, but I should not have cancelled any plans for the sake of a far-off natural disaster. I do not know anyone who died, and I do not know anyone who knew anyone. It was 150,000 strangers who died. That is surely not an unusual event. After all, how many human beings die on the planet every day? One calculation I have discovered puts it at just shy of 150,000, roughly the same number as died in the tsunami. That adds up to roughly 55 million people per year. Such figures make John Donne's famous sermon sound ridiculous. If each man's death diminishes me by even a small particle, there would not be much left by the end of a decade. The truth is that we are more affected by the death of a pet hamster than we are by the death of 150,000 strangers to whom we are not bound by ties of history, kinship, or religion.

That most people agree with this cold-blooded conclusion is evident from all the national news reports. The Italian press was filled with heart-rending stories about killed and missing Italians; the BBC focused on British victims; American newspapers and networks talked mostly of Americans. One Islamic physicians' group maintained its religious identity by saying that *jihad* was more important than ministering to the victims. What this means is clear: We feel little sorrow for the sufferings of strangers, but, if we are stirred up by the yellow press, we will clutch at anything to establish an imaginary bond of sympathy.

The "pornography of compassion," as I have described the phenomenon in *The Morality of Everyday Life*, is one of the hallmarks of the liberal mind-set. When the Lisbon earthquake wiped out a goodly part of the Portuguese capital in 1755, Voltaire rejected the cheery optimism he had imbibed from Leibniz and began railing against human suffering. He also, in a private letter, exulted that so many priests had been killed. Scratch an humanitarian, and you almost always find an anti-Christian. Samuel Johnson, by contrast, was at first skeptical about the numbers and, when they proved to be more or less correct, still refused to jump on the humanitarian bandwagon. The word he reserved for such enthusiasms was *cant*, and what was cant in 1755 is cant today.

Voltaire's sanctimonious poem on the "Lisbon Earthquake" led directly to his greatest anti-Christian squib, *Candide*, and we have been plagued ever since by the cynical sentimentalism that raises trillions of dollars to help strangers while poisoning us against the needs of family, neighbors, and friends. The Christian Dr. Johnson taught us that suffering and death are part of the human condition, and blaming God for our misery or pretending it is not so will not change that condition.

There is nothing wrong in Americans giving of their abundance to the victims of African genocide or Asian tidal waves, but there is something dreadfully wrong in the pretense that we care deeply. The more we flatter ourselves with such fantasies of universal compassion, the less room we have in our hearts for the suffering humanity we meet in our own hometowns. It is easier to write a check to a telethon than to carry supper to a shut-in. Groups such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society are to be applauded for doing what they can to discharge the obligations of Christian charity to people in their own communities. We leave it to liberals to neglect their own families while saving the world's children. Mother Teresa, when a Milwaukee woman offered to come and help the poor in Calcutta, sagely advised her to find Calcutta in Milwaukee. Charity begins at home.

—*Thomas Fleming*

IF PRESIDENT BUSH achieved nothing else in his Inaugural Address, he at least provided fodder for media pundits to chew on for a solid week or more. This is an unusual accomplishment, even for inaugural addresses, most of which are endured and then ignored by those whose job it is to listen to them and talk and write about them.

It was predictable that Republicans would like the speech. What was notable about responses to it was what the neoconservatives had to say. *Say* is perhaps not quite the word. Their reaction was less one of verbal articulation than the kind of gushing one hears in tidal waves and mud slides. The neocons liked the speech. They should have, since they essentially wrote it.

The neoconservative influence on the Inaugural Address is obvious from its text. The President's unqualified endorsement of pop utopianism, the Wilsonian principle that "it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world," is exactly what neocons have been peddling for decades.

It reflects their breezy assumption that *democracy* and *liberty* are virtual synonyms (an idea largely foreign to both classical political theory and the Founding Fathers, who thought they had established a republic that mixed forms of government, not a pure democracy). It accepts without question the assumption that "freedom" as the West understands it is a universal value for the whole world and can be institutionalized only in Western political forms.

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And from those flawed premises, it draws the *non sequitur* that American foreign policy should therefore export freedom (meaning "democracy") everywhere. The premises, the flawed logic, and the reckless conclusion are all neoconservative commonplaces.

The speech not only reflects neoconservative ideology, however; it was, in large part, the work of neoconservative hands. The *Washington Post* noted that such neocons as Bill Kristol, editor of the *Weekly Standard* and "a leading neoconservative thinker," advised the President and his speechwriters on the address. So did neoconservatives Victor Davis Hanson and Charles Krauthammer, and so did Israeli politician (and neoconservative) Nathan Sharansky, whom the President invited to the White House in November to talk about his own book on exporting democracy.

Predictably, the neocons not only helped write the speech but managed the gushing about it afterward. "It was a rare inaugural speech that will go down as a historic speech, I believe," Kristol swooned to the *Post*. "His importance as a world leader will turn out to be far larger than the sort of tactical issues that are widely debated and for which he is sometimes reviled," neoconservative kingpin Richard Perle solemnly pronounced a few days later. "Put this in a historic perspective: He's already created profound change. All around the Middle East, they're talking about the issue of democracy. They're talking about his agenda. It's an extraordinary thing."

The neocon domination of the Inaugural Address reflects their own continuing domination of the administration itself, now entrenched even more powerfully than in Bush's first term. Just as the first term brought us war in Iraq, so we can expect the second to bring us wars, well, just about wherever the neocons want to wage them. By the logic of Bush's speech, that could be almost anywhere that doesn't conform to what he and they want.

As yet another neocon gusher, Jonah Goldberg, affirmed, Bush's foreign policy is "truly revolutionary." In that description, he concurs with liberal Robert Kagan of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who writes that the President's "goals are now the antithesis of conservatism. They are revolutionary." That's OK, you see, because "the United States is a revolutionary power," and Bush has now "found his way back to the universalist principles that have usually shaped American foreign policy, regardless of the nature of the threat."

What is interesting here is not the flawed analysis of what has "usually shaped" our foreign policy but the convergence of neoconservatism and liberalism. It's interesting because, for a generation, it has been the constant theme of Old Right criticism of neoconservatism that it is largely just liberal wine in a new skin.

Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson were liberals, and all of them remain neoconservative heroes. Their foreign policies, and the words with which they defended and explained them, were barely distinguishable from what Bush wrapped himself and the nation in at his inauguration. The President accomplished something else in his address: He confirmed once and for all that the neoconservatism to which he has delivered his administration and the country is fundamentally indistinguishable from the liberalism many conservatives imagine he has renounced and defeated.

—*Samuel Francis*

ALBERTO GONZALES's nomination as attorney general by President George W. Bush makes official what has long been hidden and/or denied: The United States, contrary to her public professions and signed treaties, endorses and uses torture.

At one point during Gonzales's January 6 hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Massachusetts Sen. Edward Kennedy asked about recently released reports from FBI agents (obtained through a Freedom of Information suit by the American Civil Liberties Union) who claimed that naked detainees were bound hand-to-foot, in a fetal position, and forced to lie in their own urine and feces for periods as long as 24 hours.

"I found those e-mails to be shocking and deeply troubling," Gonzales responded. "I do not think it would be appropriate for me to address reports of interrogation practices discussed in the press and attempt to analyze whether such reported practices are lawful."

Among the torture techniques applied to unknown numbers of individuals rounded up and imprisoned by U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq were such practices as hooding for prolonged periods; forced nudity; sexual humiliation; sexual torture; sodomy with flashlights, police sticks, light bulbs, and other items; electric shocking; sleep deprivation; exposure to loud, blaring rap music; use of guard dogs to terrorize; prostitutes menstruating on naked, chained prisoners; forcing Muslims to eat pork, and blaspheming Islam.

One prisoner at Abu Ghraib recounted, "They stripped me naked, they asked me, 'Do you pray to Allah?' I said, 'Yes.' They said 'F--k you' and 'F--k him.' . . . Someone else asked me, 'Do you believe in anything?' I said to him, 'I believe in Allah.' So he said, 'But I believe in torture and I will torture you.'"

As Andrew Sullivan wrote in his review of two new books on the torture scandal ("Atrocities in Plain Sight," *New York Times*, January 13) Gonzales argued that "the president's warmaking powers gave him ultimate constitutional authority to ignore any relevant laws in the conduct of the conflict. Sticking to the Geneva Convention was the exclusive prerogative of one man, George W. Bush; and he could, if he wished, make exceptions. . . . Assistant Attorney General Jay S. Bybee . . . asserted that the president was within his legal rights to permit his military surrogates to inflict 'cruel, inhuman or degrading' treatment on prisoners without violating strictures against torture. For an act of abuse to be considered torture, the abuser must be inflicting pain 'of such a high level of intensity that the pain is difficult for the subject to endure.' If the abuser is doing this to get information and not merely for sadistic enjoyment, then 'even if the defendant knows that severe pain will result from his actions,' he's not guilty of torture."

While many Americans said they were shocked by the revelations that the United States has a torture policy, many Latin Americans said they were not, as Scotland's *Daily Herald* reporter Andrew McLeod noted. "[T]he infamous pictures of abuse at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison," he wrote, "brought back not only chilling recollections of their own experiences, but also confirmed what they have long maintained: that their torturers were following interrogation guidelines set by the US Army School of the Americas."

CIA involvement in researching the effects of torture on humans goes back to the end of World War II, and one of the most significant researchers was American Ewen Cameron, who, funded by both the CIA and the Rockefeller Foundation, experimented on thousands of

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Catholic "orphans" at McGill University's Allan Institute.

This subject is little known in the United States today, even though it was discussed in the U.S. Senate's Church Committee Report in 1976; was the subject of a CBC Television miniseries, "The Sleep Room," in 1998; and resulted in a highly publicized (in Canada) lawsuit by Canadian victims against the CIA, which the victims won. These CIA experiments—on children, even infants—included sexual abuse and humiliation, sleep deprivation, drug injections, and the use of loud music and bright lights.

Torture is very effective in dealing with "terrorists," as any American pro-lifer could explain from experiences in the early 1990's.

During the Clinton administration, pro-life men and women, as well as minor girls, were routinely beaten, sexually humiliated (in a famous Pittsburgh case, pro-life women had their shirts pulled over their heads while they were led to their cells), their wrists broken by nunchuks; pro-lifers were routinely subject to painful paralyzing grips to the neck and other parts of the body.

The widespread use of such tactics, and their acceptance by American courts, the mediarchy, and public opinion, did more to quash effective pro-life opposition to the culture of death than anything else.

The appointment of Alberto Gonzales as attorney general of the United States confirms the effectiveness of torture in subduing any population that dares resist the plans of the rulers of the cosmos.

—*Paul Likoudis*

SUSAN SONTAG passed away in New York City on the Feast of the Holy Innocents at the age of 71. Dying of leukemia after a long struggle with cancer, Sontag leaves behind no image of suffering or weakness but rather one of strength and courage, idiosyncratic integrity and productivity, and a remarkably wide range of engagement. She also leaves behind the image of herself, simply because she *was* the image of herself, like a star—and she was a star. So much so that she appeared as herself in Woody Allen's film *Zelig* (1983) and was instantly recognizable, which is more than we could say for Marshall McLuhan in another Woody Allen cameo. Such charisma is not expected from the usual Chelsea-dwelling left-wing radicals, but from Susan Sontag, it was. Back in the 1960's, she was the most identifiable of the black turtleneck crowd, the most bold and hip of the alienated intellectuals, and the most erudite. She never swerved from that path.

She was to the manner born. Born in Tucson and raised in Los Angeles, she was a graduate of North Hollywood High School and entered the University of Chicago at 16. She was already a passionate bibliophile and a philosopher. She began her career in New York at the age of 26 with little but a son, some books, and a wealth of intelligence.

Sontag quickly gained fame as the challenger of received opinions, the advocate of "the new sensibility" that broke down the old distinctions. Today, some of her enthusiasms seem quaint—Happenings, the Supremes, and all the rest of it—but her essays "Notes on Camp" and "Against Interpretation" still have their force, because she pushed the limits. As an early novelist and short-story writer, she was a dud, but remarkably enough, she did write successful fiction toward the end of her life, in a more conventional mode of discourse than anyone had ever expected. Today, the best of her 17 books seems to be *On Photography* (1977). As a political activist, she is remembered for her visits to Hanoi and to Cuba as well as for declaring that "America is founded on a genocide. . . . The white race is the cancer of human history." She called for intervention in the former Yugoslavia and went to Sarajevo during the bombing. And she is remembered also for her anti-Stalinist rebukes to left-wing audiences. If anyone had earned the right to ask, as she did of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, "Where is the acknowledgment that this was not a 'cowardly' attack on 'civilization' or 'liberty' or 'humanity' or 'the free world' but an attack on the world's self-proclaimed superpower, undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions?" then Susan Sontag had earned that right.

Susan Sontag enjoyed more than once calling Americans "yahoos," following H.L. Mencken, and the question there, as with Mencken, is not whether she was insulting but whether she was right. She once challenged her readers to "cross the Hudson" to see if she was correct, revealing the Manhattanite provinciality that she herself would have deplored, had she not embodied it. She also once declared that one could have learned more about the nature of communism from *Reader's Digest* (that bible of yahoos) than from *Partisan Review*, and, considering her context, that was the most revolutionary thing she ever uttered.

Though in her hypertrophied intellect and radical style and consequent lack of humor she distanced herself from Middle America, she was, nevertheless, more American than her European-style alienation would suggest. She was an explorer and a pathfinder, and an individualist even in visiting the collectivist North Vietnam. She did what she could and what she wanted, and she said what she had to say because she had to—and who would have it any other way? She had much in common with the great romantic American writers of the 19th century. Not without reason, the passing of such people is felt as though a star had dimmed.

—*James O. Tate*

OBITER DICTA: The *Cultural Revolutions* piece on President Bush's Inaugural Address by our political editor **Samuel Francis** comes to us courtesy of Creators Syndicate.

Our first poet this month is **Catharine Savage Brosman** of New Orleans. Her poetry and prose have appeared in the *New England Review*, the *Southern Review*, and the *Sewanee Review*, among others. Two collections of her verse, *The Swimmer and Other Poems* (R.L. Barth) and *Places in Mind* (LSU Press), were published in 2001. Her most recent book of poetry, *A Muscled Truce*, appeared in 2004 (LSU Press).

Our second poet is **Sally Cook**, an artist from Silver Creek, New York. Miss Cook's paintings have been exhibited across the United States for over 40 years in such venues as the Albright/Knox Museum, the Bronx Museum, the NYU Student Center, and the World Trade Center. Some of her works belong to the William H. Littlefield Collection at Harvard University and the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as several other public and private collections nationwide.

Our cover and interior art is provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

Additional interior art is provided by **Elizabeth Wolf** of Chicago. Miss Wolf received her B.F.A. from the School of Art at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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by Thomas Fleming

Human, Not-Quite Human

The doping scandals that plague professional and "amateur" sports have done little to shake the enthusiasm of fans and sportswriters for their heroes. Fans still flock to the stadiums and spend their weekends watching NBA basketball games, NASCAR races, and even (if ABC is to be believed) AFL football exhibitions. As a child, I once saw a mock-scandal tabloid that "revealed" the secret of Bob Feller's fastball: a cannon surgically implanted into the pitcher's arm. A crude joke in the 1950's has become reality, albeit in a more sophisticated form. But no Dr. Frankenstein today would resort to stitching up corpses when there are unborn babies to harvest and recycle.

To be fair, many sports fans do concede that it *is* wrong to break the rules, that even home-run hitters should be made, from time to time, to face the indignation of the underconditioned effeminates who bask in the reflected virility of star athletes. But, as Frank de Ford opined one morning on National Public Radio, sports have always been about transcending limits, and, lamentable as it may seem, it is not in an athlete's nature to pass up anything that will put him in the record books or increase the value of his endorsements. Paraphrasing Burke, one might say that, whatever is the road to a record, that is the road that will be trod, preferably on Nike or Adidas.

Athletes are not alone in using magic elixirs to enhance their powers. Students who take Focusin may now achieve higher levels of concentration (though, considering how little is actually required in college these days, I do not know why they bother). And, if the illusion of success is more important than reality—as it seems to be for most people—there is virtual-reality TV for daydreamers who cannot follow the plot of a sitcom, virtual sex and instant messaging for souls too timid to pitch woo or hold hands, and video games to give the thrill of slaughter to little boys afraid to fight with their fists.

In seeking power from steroids and microchips, we become their slaves, and, in losing our freedom, we lose at least a part of our humanity. Even the teenage moviegoers who have sold their souls for so little apparently sense this. Why else did they flock to see *Terminator* and *The Matrix* and dozens of lesser-known films suggesting that our "reality" is controlled by electronic or extraterrestrial powers? In reaching for power, or the illusion of power, we slip into imbecility.

Nietzsche, who understood the will to power as well as anyone, also knew that true power cannot come out of a bottle, a magic pill, surgical enhancement, or a computer. By no means in robust health, Nietzsche disliked weakness, deformity, and any form of dependence. He observed that a cripple who gets on a horse and rides it to the top of a mountain will limp, nonetheless, when he dismounts. What is done by a machine or steroids does no credit to frail flesh. Intuitively, we seem to know, or used to, that Columbus was more heroic in setting off, with a small crew in three small ships, to find the way to India than any astronaut sent into space by a vast team of scientists and engineers. Tom Wolfe was certainly right to praise the "right stuff" displayed by American astronauts, but, as men, they seem pale and colorless beside Charles Lindbergh or Captain Cook. If man can only transcend his limitations by relying on the inhuman apparatus provided by technology, he might as well content himself with being human, all-too human.

Nietzsche would doubtless be appalled more by such language of Christian resignation than by the technological transcendence to which sports heroes, mountain climbers, and electronic musicians aspire. After nourishing his genius on Byron's *Manfred*, the music of Wagner, and the melancholy philosophy of Schopenhauer, this Lutheran pastor's son realized that Christianity had reached a dead end in the rationalized theology of 19th century Protestantism. The faith of his fathers was undermined by books, which, in retrospect, seem as childish as the Emerson essays he loved. Anticipating the collapse of progressive Protestantism, Nietzsche was just barely able to acknowledge that the end of Christianity might mean the end not just of civilization but of humanity itself.

His solution, variously stated in a series of increasingly incoherent and megalomaniac books, was to go "beyond good and evil," recognizing that the will to power is the wellspring of all human endeavor, the saint's and the scholar's no less than the warrior's or the statesman's. The inadequacy of Nietzsche's responses (or the bizarre and self-tormented life that Curtis Cate has recently surveyed with, perhaps, greater sympathy than the failed philologist deserved) should not prevent us from seeing that he had diagnosed the illness of his own and the coming age. At the very time that European man was pursuing the uninspiring comforts promised by bourgeois liberalism and Marxist socialism, the brightest spirits—a danger in any age—were dreaming wilder and wilder dreams of surpassing the limits of common humanity. William Godwin had picked up Franklin's silliest idea, that science could triumph over death (presumably by using Galvanic electrical shocks, as Godwin's daughter Mary was to employ in *Frankenstein*); for Carlyle and Nietzsche, life beyond life was to be sought in heroism; for the Wagnerians, it was art. One of France's greatest poets dreamed of producing a book of verse so perfect that it would transform the world (though even the fragments of Mallarmé's *Livre* are unreadable). But sober Englishmen also dreamed the dream of art: Matthew Arnold thought that culture might replace religion and—this is the most preposterous notion of all—that the teaching of English literature could be made the instrument of cultural elevation. In the end, all the projects came to nothing, which is the common fate of all such projects. The moment we are tempted to view human life as a set of design problems to be analyzed and overcome, we have doomed ourselves to inconsequence.

Anyone who has dabbled in the literature of the 19th century is familiar with the search for surrogate Christianities. Carlyle, Nietzsche, Wagner, and Arnold had all lost whatever faith they had received and spent their lives in a desperate search to fill the void. Theirs was a painful dilemma. Whatever good there was in the world had been either invented or transformed by the Christianity they rejected. Nietzsche, with his bound-

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less ignorance of Christianity, could rail as much as he liked against Christ, the Church, and the notions he erroneously attributed to both, but even he acknowledged that the medieval Church produced splendid men and a genuine aristocracy. In repudiating Christendom, none of them had any remotely practical substitute. Their dreams of high art, free love, and barbarian violence were as atavistic and contemptible—and as impossible—as the Marxists' socialist dream of economic equality and state-imposed community.

In failing to resolve the dilemma, 19th-century prophets point to a deeper issue. If God (or "the gods") are indispensable to man, and if the worship of God can only be replaced by some set of supermen, whether artists or heroes, then perhaps humanity is not possible, not even conceivable, in a universe without God. E.O. Wilson, a staunch unbeliever, once conjectured that religion must have a "survival value" like other universal human phenomena (such as the incest taboo and competition for power). In any society, liberals and reformers who reject religion or sexual taboos or the virtues of courage and patriotism are effectively eliminating themselves, their followers, and—if they are really effective—their whole people from the gene pool. From the Darwinist perspective, then, it hardly matters whether God or gods exist, since religion—true or false—is indispensable to human existence.

In a dim way, even deists—who are little better than well-intentioned atheists—acknowledge the social significance of religion. The argument goes back at least to Polybius, who attributed Rome's success to the deep piety of the Roman people. The Roman republic, as Polybius acknowledged, depended on the favor of the thousands of gods whose will they were forever ascertaining through auguries and whom, in their sacrifices, they were seeking to propitiate. The Romans, he observed, could not have been more religious (that is, scrupulous in their rituals) if they tried, and the result was a people who kept their oaths and won the confidence of friends and enemies alike.

Compared with Polybius' insight, the tepid endorsement of religion offered by deists is trivial and even dangerous. If supernatural terrors are only useful as a tool for repressing the anarchic masses, the superior man will reject religion. Nietzsche himself would have found his argument made already by Critias, the friend of Socrates and leader of Athens' "30 tyrants," and Plato puts it in the mouths of Critias' kinsman Callicles (in the *Gorgias*) and Thrasymachus (in the *Republic*). The acknowledgement of religion as social necessity, however, begs a more serious question that escaped Voltaire as much as it did Critias and Nietzsche. If a successful human culture requires religion, man must be regarded as, by definition, a religious animal, in which case man, living in a universe devoid of gods, could not be fully human.

Man cannot live without God, even if it is the god he makes of himself. The heirs of many Roman emperors were brought up as little divinities, and the result was monsters such as Caligula, Nero, Domitian, and Caracalla. Now we are rearing Americans in much the same way and with much the same results. As students, they rank at or near the bottom of developed nations, but at the top in self-esteem. In transcending the limitations of the flesh, in piling Ossa on Pelion to overtop Olympus, we reject our own nature and assume the mantle of divinity. But what kind of a garment does it turn out to be?

The Greeks told the story of Hercules, the son of Zeus who labored mightily for the human race. In a minor episode, he killed Nessus, the man-bull who attempted to rape his wife, shooting the beast with a poisoned arrow. The dying centaur told Deianira to smear his blood on a cloak and to give it to her husband as a magic philter if she ever lost his love. When the hero returned with a younger mistress, she sent the cloak to him, and he donned it, out of respect to his wife, as he was making a sacrifice. The warmth of the fire activated the poisoned blood, and, enveloped in searing flames of agony, Hercules threw himself into the sacrificial fire. His father, in one version, took pity and made him a god.

Our own mantle of divinity turns out to be deceptive, imbued with the bestial poison that will burn up our humanity, but none of us will receive the reward of Hercules, who, for the pains he endured for humanity's sake, was elevated to the company of the gods. Christians recognize, in the stories of Hercules and Dionysus and Orpheus, a dim foreshadowing of the Christian story, but, as they also know, that story is unique. Our fate, if we attempt to rise above the merely human, is to become a beast like the centaur, a slave of the most brutal passions. Man is a social animal, warned Aristotle, and those who try to escape this limitation must either rise above humanity, as only Hercules and a few others did, or sink below it.

I have been speaking, for the most part, to well-intentioned pagans. Christians already understand that all the methods used to subvert the purposes of nature—whether abortion, contraception, *in vitro* fertilization, or genetic engineering—are devices of the devil, and, if there are Christians who do not know, shame on the faithless pastors who have betrayed their sheep and on the churches that have betrayed the teachings they have received. Luther and Calvin, no less than Augustine and Thomas, were entirely clear in rejecting every attempt to frustrate the ends of our sexual nature. But pagans, too, are rejecting the best pagan traditions embodied in the Hippocratic prohibition on abortion and in the Delphic "know thyself" endorsed by Socrates and Pindar's even more explicit admonition: "Do not seek to become a god."

Nietzsche, who could not content himself with mere humanity—real women, a decent university job in Basel, the ordinary pleasures of life—ended up mad with syphilis and self-absorption. The man who spurned Christian sexual mores could not bring himself to make a pass at a woman he could not pay for, and the nearest thing to a sexual proposition he could make was to propose a chaste *ménage à trois* involving himself, a friend, and a sexually disturbed liberated woman. In so many ways, this human, not-quite human philosopher anticipated the things we have become. C

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Blue Spruce, Santa Fé

by Catharine Savage Brosman

High priests before the snowy tableland,
their boughs outspread as though in offering,
in caps and cloaks of frost the blue spruce stand,
officiants as winter yields to spring.

In sheltered patios, alien redbud blooms;
old apple trees look young again in white;
forsythia erupts in yellow plumes;
and careless tulips opened in the night;

while cottonwoods, despite their armor, keep
hibernal prudence; skeletal, they hold
new fasciae of shoots transfixed in sleep—
green promises of summer, autumn's gold.

For winter will not leave without a show
of force—late fog, raw wind, wet flakes' reprise;
the mountains stir in mantles of fresh snow,
half-visible through tears in sulking skies.

Perennially sober, just, serene,
their bristling needles dense and twilight-dark,
the blue spruce watch the seasons' shifting scene,
great conic beings on a cosmic ark,

and, nearly changeless, wave to bless the change
as whirling world and wheels of time engage
again, conveying us along the range
down river, into riper light and sage.

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by Roger D. McGrath

A Hero Among Heroes

Ever since the late 1960's, the cultural Marxists of academe have worked assiduously to destroy American heroes or simply to omit them from textbooks—and they have been largely successful. As we approach the 60th anniversary of VE Day and VJ Day and the youngest of the World War II veterans are entering their 80's, it saddens me to find that most young Americans know nothing of such heroes as Butch O'Hare, Jimmy Doolittle, Joe Foss, John Basilone, Red Mike Edson, Commando Kelly, Pappy Boyington, Dick O'Kane, Dave McCampbell, Father O'Callahan, Tommy McGuire, Dick Bong, or Audie Murphy.

These men were my heroes when growing up. I was told stories about them, read about them, saw movies about them. This was all part of an American boy's life in the 1940's, 50's, and well into the 60's. We didn't hate ourselves then. We were inspired by the courage and daring skill of a Doolittle or an O'Hare and aspired to be like them.

For many in America, Audie Murphy was the hero of heroes. I had an uncle who served in an outfit under the same command for a time as Murphy. The uncle could not tell me enough about Murphy, the most decorated American of the war—of any war. I remember my uncle saying—and he was from Superior, Wisconsin, about as far north as one can go in the contiguous 48, and no particular fan of the Lone Star State—that there is no better, tougher, more courageous fighter on earth than an Irishman from Texas.

Murphy would seem like the perfect candidate to remain a famous American hero. The seventh of 12 children born to a sharecropper and his wife, he was the ultimate underdog in a nation of underdogs during the Great Depression. His alcoholic father left the family for parts unknown when Audie was 14. His mother died just before he turned 16. "People know me for my record as a soldier," said Murphy in the 1950's.

> But the truth is I must have done some of my best fighting in a war I was in long before I joined the Army. You might say there never was a "peace time" in my life, a time when things were good. . . . I never had just "fun." I am one Texan boy who never had a pair of cowboy boots. I am one native-born and native-bred American male who actually doesn't know the rules of our national pastime—baseball. I never had time to play or the paraphernalia you play it with. I never had a bike. It was a full-time job just existing.

Murphy spent most of the years of his youth not inside a classroom but in the fields picking cotton, toting a sack for the first time when he was five. The few years he actually attended school were marked by weeks of absences necessitated by work. At school, he was often in fights. Despite being smaller than the playground bullies, he was never one to back down. His teacher called him "my Fighting Irishman" and said that Murphy's childhood was "always a struggle against many odds, but he was intelligent, industrious, quick to anger, but very loyal and devoted to the ones he loved."

Lying about his age, Murphy enlisted in the Army a week after his 17th birthday. The official records still have the year of his birth wrong. He had first tried to join the Marines, but they turned him down because he looked like a malnourished 13-year-old. With auburn hair and blue eyes, freckles and a baby face, he appeared more cherub than warrior. Nonetheless, "Little Texas," as he was nicknamed in basic training, would rise from private to 1st lieutenant and be awarded 33 medals, including the Medal of Honor, the French Croix de Guerre with Palm, the Belgian Croix de Guerre with Palm, the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars with V, and three Purple Hearts—all before he turned 20.

What Murphy did in Sicily, Italy, and France defies the imagination. His final action occurred in the Colmar pocket on the border of Germany in January 1945. With more than 200 enemy troops supported by six enemy tanks advancing on his position, an already wounded Murphy ordered the men of his company to retreat across the snow-covered ground to some nearby woods. All alone, Murphy remained behind and directed artillery fire at the oncoming Germans, interrupting his transmissions only to use his carbine to drop one German soldier after another. When his ammunition was exhausted, Murphy climbed onto a burning tank destroyer and opened up with its machine gun. "The German infantrymen," said Sgt. Elmer Brawley, "got within 10 yards of Lt. Murphy, who killed them in the draws, in the meadows, in the woods."

Two German shells exploded on the tank destroyer and slammed Murphy into the turret. For a moment, he appeared dead from the concussion, but he dragged himself back to the .50 caliber and continued firing. "I remember getting the hell shook out of me," he said, "but that was nothing new. I also remember for the first time in three days my feet were warm." Murphy's accurate fire direction and his own deadly fire caused the German advance to falter, then collapse. Enveloped in smoke, bleeding profusely, and with flames licking his legs, he leaped from the tank destroyer and began limping toward the woods. Behind him, the destroyer exploded.

After the war, he wrote a best-selling autobiography and starred in more than 40 films, including *To Hell and Back*, the highest grossing movie of 1955. He wrote 14 songs, including two that charted in the top ten, "Shutters and Boards" and "When the Wind Blows in Chicago." In 1996, the Texas legislature declared his birthday "Audie Murphy Day." Three years later, Texas governor George W. Bush did the same. Yet Murphy, a hero among heroes, is conspicuously absent in school textbooks today and unknown to most students. c

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The Abolition of Learning

Schools in the Rubbish Heap

by Michael McMahon

In 1997, the headmaster of the English secondary school in which I was teaching ordered a bibliocaust. The inspectors were coming, and he wanted our library to look up-to-date. All the old stuff had to go; only bright, modern volumes relevant to the contemporary curriculum were to be on the shelves. Each department was told to appoint a teacher to a team that would pick over all the books and cast any that were dated or dusty into a skip. A more-perfect metaphor for the British government's treatment of education would be hard to imagine. The past is rejected, on principle; obedience to the new orthodoxy is unchallengeable; what matters above all is how things look. Of course, the same invincible arrogance is displayed in every area of New Labour neoconservatism, but it is most keenly and determinedly exercised in education, which is the anvil upon which future generations are beaten into shape.

Before the lorry came to cart away our cultural cast-offs, I rescued as many books as I could, but the container was full to the brim, and I could only pick over the top couple of layers. So I did not, alas, find the complete set of *Scrutiny* that I knew to be somewhere in the heap, but I did recover the school's leather-bound Lewis and Short Latin-English dictionary. I have it before me now. It still has its comforting library smell. On its inside front cover is a plate, dated 1932. Above it is written, "This book may not be removed from the library." It has been, however—along with countless other books that were the rightful inheritance of generations of English schoolchildren to come.

Among the tomes that Blair's bullies caused to be rejected were many that form the cornerstone of any civilized library. Several contained prophetic warnings of the destructive zeal that would consign them and books like them to the skip. I recovered copies of C.S. Lewis's *The Problem of Pain*, *Mere Christianity*, and *Reflections on the Psalms*, but our copy of *The Abolition of Man* must have been thrown away earlier and lay buried too deeply. *The Abolition of Man* is a series of lectures that most explicitly warns against the perverse modernity that now poisons English universities and schools. In it, Lewis warns that education is in danger of being taken over by what he calls "Conditioners," those who would use it to train youngsters to become something that suits the plans of an arrogant, manipulative elite:

> The old dealt with its pupils as grown birds deal with young birds when they teach them to fly, the new deals with them more as the poultry-keeper deals with young birds—making them thus and thus for purposes of which the birds know nothing. In a word, the old was a kind of propagation—men transmitting manhood to men; the new is merely propaganda.

Michael McMahon writes from Norfolk, England.

The spirit that Lewis describes now directs the entire British educational process, which has been reconstructed to produce wage-slaves to serve the national economy. School pupils are no longer equipped to think freely; they are not taught to question but to provide the right replies. What they need to know is not found in libraries of accumulated ideas and opinions but in textbooks that have been authorized by the government. Yes, there are still pockets of critical thinking here and there in the system, just as there are pockets of air in a recently sunk ship. Those bubbles are not going to bring the vessel back to the surface, however, and those that inhabit them will not survive for long.

Rescuing those C.S. Lewis books was instinctive and inevitable: They all but leapt into my outraged hands. But there was unfamiliar treasure trove, too, including one remarkable book on whose spine were the letters B.W.P. When I opened it, I found that they stood for "The British Way and Purpose." It was a collection of essays on citizenship used by the British army to teach our troops what they were fighting for—and against—in World War II. When I read what the book had to say about education, I realized that, in that department at least, those troops had fought in vain.

The B.W.P. speaks proudly of a system in which "headmasters and headmistresses are free, within wide limits, to run their schools on the lines they think best. They in turn, if they are wise, leave their staff to work out their own syllabus and methods." Anything further from today's teaching by government-issued numbers would be impossible to imagine. Now, headmasters and headmistresses are free, within narrow limits, to run their schools on the lines that the government has ordained are best. Neither they nor their staff have any more freedom of operation than that enjoyed by railway-station ticket clerks. The syllabus is fixed nationally, and teaching methods are imposed and inspected by a massive machinery of management designed to serve not the children but the government. The B.W.P. contrasts the freedom and openness of English learning as it then was with the tyrannous regimentation of schools in Nazi Germany, where "the purpose of education is to mould people to a fixed pattern, so that they are forced to fit in with the way of life imposed by a government or party." A better definition of contemporary British education would be hard to find.

That this should be the case is self-evidently tragic; there is an aspect to this particular tragedy, however, that makes it all the more intense. New Labour's inversion of educational values has been widely accepted; the people have been told the lie that they want to hear. They naturally desire material prosperity and security; the Conditioners have persuaded them that education exists solely to provide it. The idea that the sole purpose of study is to prepare people for employment has been

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so relentlessly iterated that it now goes unchallenged. It is the starting point, not the conclusion, of any educational argument. The lie is not that learning leads to earning—which it usually does—but that learning is *for* earning, which it is not.

The lie is believed, however, and vast amounts of time, energy, and money—public money—have been spent in shoring it up. If a job exists, institutionalized education must be provided for it, or the belief that everyone needs to be educated to get a job cannot be maintained. An ever-increasing number of half-witted courses have been created as a result. The laughably named examination board Edexcel now offers a two-unit diploma in wheel clamping—an art that can be mastered in perhaps 20 minutes but which is puffed up to keep a student—and his assessor, the assessor's verifier, and the verifier's moderator—occupied for a week. The Swansea Institute of Higher Education (no, I hadn't heard of it before, either) has recently launched a three-year B.A. course in surf and beach management, and several of our newer universities offer degrees that qualify students to manage golf courses. Sure, leisure beaches need lifeguards and golf courses need managers, and the people who meet those needs have to know what they are doing, but does that knowledge warrant the award of a degree?

Your answer and mine might be "no," but Tony Blair's answer would be different. It has to be. He has announced that he wants 50 percent of those under age 30 to attend university by the year 2010, and they are all going to have to study something. The figure is arbitrary: It was not preceded by any public debate on the subject. Like the decision to abolish the thousand-year-old lord chancellorship, it simply proceeded from the mouth of the prime minister. If our universities were still universities in the traditional sense, of course, that 50-percent figure would be unattainable. No nation could possibly function if every other person were an academic. But that does not mean that, in the Britain Blair is building, every other person cannot get a degree. (Though it does mean that B.A. ends up meaning "Bugger All.")

Most of this wasteful, dishonest, pseudoeducational silliness is played out in the country's countless colleges and technical institutes that have been rebranded and empowered to confer degrees. Meanwhile, significant damage is being visited upon Britain's real universities, the places that people have actually heard of. Tin-pot colleges only have to run crackpot courses for below-par undergraduates, but traditional universities have to conduct academic research. That costs money, and the government provides it—but only according to its own rules. Funds are allocated under the Research Assessment Exercise, which distributes amounts to university departments according to the quality of their research.

On the face of it, this might sound like an idea that fosters academic excellence, but, in Blair's Brave New Britain, things are never quite what they seem. Just as the unspoken purpose of schools is now to provide statistical outcomes that keep the inspectors off their backs and make the government look good, the preoccupation of universities is not the pursuit of knowledge but the pursuit of funds. The intrinsic value of any research is less important than the number of points it earns toward a target figure that has to be met. Papers are rushed into print to meet assessment deadlines; long theses are split in two to earn double points.

Such gamesmanship is almost forgivable when one considers what is at stake. This year, top-scoring research departments get a 4.75-percent funding increase, but those that miss the threshold even by a whisker get a cut of 42 percent. Given that many universities have to subsidize their teaching costs with part of their research income, the result has been that several good departments have had to close. At the time of writing, the architecture department at Cambridge is threatened with closure; physics is finished at Newcastle; and the musicians and chemists at Exeter have been told to shut up shop. The Exeter press release makes particularly depressing reading, for it shows how the independent spirit of even our best universities has been utterly crushed:

> The Council of the University of Exeter (its supreme governing body) today voted overwhelmingly in favour of proposals designed to refocus its academic activity . . . Chemistry will be phased out. At Council there were 26 votes for the proposals, 2 against and one abstension [*sic*]. Music making will continue and be strengthened by the appointment of a full time Director of Music but the academic study of Music will cease once the current cohort of students has graduated. [*Anyone still wondering whether the barbarians are within the gates is invited to read that last sentence again.*] At Council there were 23 votes for the proposals, 2 against and 4 abstensions [*sic*] . . . The changes endorsed by Council are designed to refocus the University's academic activities, enabling it to reduce financial losses in some departments and allow those making a surplus to invest in their future success. They are also a response to recent changes in the higher education marketplace . . .

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And there we have it, spelling mistake and all. Education is a commodity in the marketplace; academic activity is justified by financial success. It is hard to read that press release without disgust. When the percussionist Evelyn Glennie heard its contents, she sent back her honorary degree. Nobel prize-winning chemist Sir Harold Kroto sent his back, too. Even more disgusted were the chemistry students that started their degrees last October. They were told just before Christmas that their first term was to be their last. The system that Blair and his cronies have created has treated them exactly as C.S. Lewis said it would. The poultry-keeper has not taught his fledglings to fly; he has trained them to peck. And when market forces make feeding them unprofitable, what choice has he but to wring their necks?

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Music, Technology, and Psychological Warfare

by E. Michael Jones

"No change can be made in styles of music without affecting the most important conventions of society. So Damon declares and I agree."

—Plato, *Republic*

The late Sam Shapiro used to tell a story about two Englishmen in China who wanted to demonstrate the superiority of their culture to one of the mandarins they had met. They erected a tennis court in front of his residence and proceeded to play in front of him in the hot sun for two hours. After the game was over, the two sweaty Englishmen asked the mandarin what he thought. "Wouldn't it be simpler," the mandarin replied, "to have your servants do this for you?"

The mandarin's response brings us directly to the question of delegation and indirectly to the issue of technology, which makes much of the delegation of modern life possible. There are some functions that no one, not even the very rich, delegates. Chewing food comes immediately to mind. So does begetting children, although the inexorable march of the technically possible has muddied these waters somewhat. The other end of the spectrum is made up of the sort of activity that no one (in his right mind) would do if he could pay someone to do it for him—shoveling manure from a stable, mowing the lawn, changing oil in your car, and all of the myriad other mechanical tasks that make life possible.

What about the vast space between these two extremes? What about, say, making a chair or building a brick wall? Here, skill plays a role in helping us make the decision. Generally, if we cannot do it ourselves, we have to pay someone to do it for us. If we can do it ourselves but do not have the time, it falls into the "shoveling manure" category above. There is, however, some intrinsic satisfaction in making something like a wall or a chair, a satisfaction that cannot be purchased, no matter how skillful or cheap the carpenter or the mason we might hire. If I have the requisite skills, only I can make the chair that really expresses my desires about whatever it is I plan to do in that chair—reading, for example, or playing the mandolin.

Where does music fit into this spectrum of human activity? Is it something that you make or something that you buy? Well, it depends on who you are and when you lived. If you were poor and lived a long time ago, you made your music yourself or you listened to other people make it at various public events: Mass, processions, coronations, *etc*. If you were wealthy, you could pay other people to play music for you, a practice that often meant that, if you were very wealthy and lived in a country where musical traditions went deep, you could hire some of the best musicians who ever walked the face of the earth.

Today, you can now buy a CD, pop it into your stereo, and have, as it were, Beethoven performing in your living room. Given this possibility, why would anyone make music on his own, especially if, as in the case of yours truly, he most certainly lacks the skill of an Arthur Rubenstein or a Yehudi Menuhin or a Christopher Parkening? Or is listening to a CD like having your servants play tennis for you?

I played guitar in a rock band in Germany 30 years ago, but, when I returned to the United States, I suddenly decided that I did not like that music anymore. So I put my guitar away (except for rare occasions) and spent the next 25 years listening to recordings of classical music. Then something happened. My youngest son inherited a violin from my wife's family, and, around the same time, the two of us attended a ceili at a local parish, where live Irish music was being played. I suddenly realized that I liked the music, that the two of us could play that kind of music, and, most importantly, that I wanted to play my own music for a change, even if other people could play more sophisticated music better than I could.

Just why I felt this way became clear to me only years later, when I read Ralph Vaughan Williams' book *National Music*. Music, according to Vaughan Williams, is the expression of a deep emotion, and so paying other people to do it for us is something like paying for someone else to cheer for you at a football game. If your team has just scored a touchdown, you want to cheer yourself, because, if you do not, the emotion you feel will not get expressed. The sports analogy is especially apt for our age, when most people experience sports vicariously by watching professionals perform it on television. Since we live in what Vaughan Williams calls "an age of specialization and delegation," we see nothing strange in the fact that we "get other people to play our games for us and look on shivering at a football match, instead of getting out of it for ourselves the healthy exercise and excitement which should surely be its only object."

Paying people to make music for you is nothing new. The wealthy have long done this, but they have paid a price for their enjoyment in more ways than one. "Music," Vaughan Williams says of himself and the English, "is not an industry which flourishes naturally in our climate." As a result,

> those who want it and can afford it must hire it from abroad. This idea . . . began in England, I think, in the early 18th century, when the political power got into the hands of the entirely uncultured landed gentry and the practice of art was considered unworthy of a gentleman, from which it followed that you had to hire a "damned foreigner" to do it for you if you wanted it, from which

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in its turn followed the corollary that the type of music which the foreigner brought with him was the only type worth having and that the very different type of music which was being made at home must necessarily be wrong.

Taking his cue from Ricardo and the Manchester school of economics and their idea of "comparative advantage," Vaughan Williams compared the English penchant for cigars to the English penchant for music and concluded that the English have a comparative advantage in neither field. Vaughan Williams feels that, when it comes to something mechanical like cigars, the English should pay other people, like Cubans, to make them for them. He does not, however, feel the same way about English music. There are some things that only you can do.

Music is something worth doing, and anything worth doing is, as Gustav Holst used to say, worth doing badly. There are some emotions that only I can express, even if I express them badly. No one can sing every song well. Just because someone can sing "Nessun Dorma" does not mean that he can sing "Moon River." Luciano Pavarotti's performance during the Three Tenors concert in Los Angeles is proof of that. Most people would say that my voice does not compare to Pavarotti's, but I can sing "Moon River" better than he can because I am an American. Similarly, no one would insist that the English produce their own cigars, but something got lost when the English stopped producing their own music. If the wealthy English pay "damned foreigners" to make their music for them, they will end up with damned foreign music, and Englishmen will forever be at odds, in some profound sense, with their own emotional being.

The advent of recording technology suddenly put the average man in the position of the 18th-century gentry, but it did not really change anything. Technology simply deferred the question, which Vaughan Williams raised in 1932 when he gave the series of lectures at Bryn Mawr College on which *National Music* was based. In the face of all of the expert performances now available to us, wouldn't it be "Better [to] give up the struggle and become a merely passive listener?" No, because "Music is, first and foremost, self-expression; without that it is a falsehood." If we all became "passive listeners," "Whom should we find to listen to?" Music would die of "inanition."

Vaughan Williams points up a paradox that C.S. Lewis developed roughly 15 years later in his essay *The Abolition of Man*. What we call technology is really the power of some men over others, which means that technology is implicitly but invariably exploitable as a form of control. Technology means an increase in power, but that power is always at the disposal of the people who control the technology. In realms mechanical, we accept this fact as the price of doing business, but in realms of the spirit—production of culture, for example—the price quickly becomes exorbitant. Paying other people to produce our culture for us is like hiring other men to sire our children. The children who result from this act will not be our own. Lewis mentions the airplane, the wireless, and the contraceptive as examples of the technology that allows some men to wield power over others. He might just as well have mentioned the record player, because, as soon as music was recorded and sent over wires, it was used as a form of control. It happened 10 years before Vaughan Williams spoke at Bryn Mawr and 25 years before Lewis wrote his essay.

Muzak, otherwise known as elevator music or dentist music, came into existence in 1922, the result of two technological breakthroughs. The first was the development of propaganda theory during World War I; the second was the ability to reproduce music mechanically. The man who brought both together was Brig. Gen. William Owen Squier, one of the early pioneers in social engineering. Once it became possible to reproduce music and send it over wires, it was possible to apply concretely the insights Plato and Aristotle had garnered in their study of the effect of music on the soul: social engineering masquerading as entertainment. Squier studied techniques of crowd control and the then-nascent field of industrial psychology, specifically Frederick Winslow Taylor's 1911 blueprint for human behavior, *Principles of Scientific Management*. Over the years, the Muzak Corporation worked on refining particular forms of music as way of generating specific kinds of behavior.

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Muzak president Waddill Catchings assigned each song in the Muzak library a stimulus code, which was to produce in the unwary listener the effect desired by the establishment. In factories, the desired effect was increased productivity. In stores, it was an increase in consumption. In restaurants, the music's tempo was quickened during busy hours, and the people who listened to it were found to chew faster and leave the restaurant sooner, freeing up seats and increasing sales. According to Joseph Lanza, author of *Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy Listening and Other Moodsong*, "twelve young English women employed in making paper firecrackers apparently worked better and harbored less of a resentful attitude when exposed to morning music." Results like that caught the attention of social engineers.

The key to achieving these results was "Stimulus Progression," the Muzak Corporation's method of organizing the music in an "ascending curve" by accelerating the tempo in order to counter the "fatigue curve."

The progression from more subdued songs to more stimulating songs in 15-minute sequences throughout the average workday yielded more efficiency and productivity than did random programming. Play lists were soon tailored to offset workers' mood swings and peak periods as measured on a Muzak mood-rating scale from "Gloomy—minus three" to "Ecstatic—plus eight."

With the outbreak of World War II, music was once again integrated into the field of psychological warfare. Impressed

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with its success in increasing productivity, the U.S. government put Muzak to work as part of the psychological arsenal that would defeat Hitler. Richard Cardinell, a member of the U.S. War Production Board (and later, a research director for Muzak), envisioned a world where each day would begin with military marches and a fox trot or polka "to wipe the gloom off the faces of the incoming employees and perhaps to instill a little *esprit de corps* into the whole group." According to Cardinell,

> the worker should be no more aware of the music than of good lighting. The rhythms, reaching him subconsciously, create a feeling of well-being and eliminate strain. . . . In some cases it is possible to achieve a direct production increase by playing a program which completely ignores employee preferences and concentrates on the functional aspects only.

By 1946, *Readers Digest* was asking, "Have you tried working to Music?" "[M]usic is now being piped into banks, insurance companies, publishing houses and other offices where brain workers find that it lessens tension and keeps everyone in a happier frame of mind."

Ethnic music is ordered music, based on melody, and there is a moral order in melody because, in arousing the emotions and then bringing them back under control, returning them to the note with which they began, melody teaches lessons about the moral order even before the age of reason.

Not everyone was happy about this psychological manipulation through music. During the postwar period, a lawsuit was filed against the Washington, D.C., transit authority when it began piping Muzak into its buses. The Supreme Court eventually decided that being forced to listen to elevator music while sitting in a bus was not unconstitutional, but the bus company discontinued it anyway.

By the mid-50's, Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* voiced the growing concern that "many of us are being influenced and manipulated, far more than we realize in our everyday lives." Packard cites the complaint of an advertising executive that

> Social scientists in the past have paid attention to the irrational patterns of human behavior because they wish to locate their social origins and thus be able to suggest changes that would result in more rational conduct. They now study irrationality—and other aspects of human behavior—to gather data that may be used by salesmen to manipulate customers.

What Packard did not know at the time is that these advertising techniques, as well as the increasingly manipulative nature of social life in general during the 1950's, were part of a larger strategy of psychological warfare developed by the OSS during World War II and then continued in clandestine fashion after the war. The principal justification for this clandestine coercion on the part of our government was the threat of international communism. Packard was witnessing the techniques of psychological warfare, refined in the battle with fascism and communism, now being used to engineer consent with neutral nations and with targeted populations at home. Mass marketing was, in many ways, the most benign form of social engineering being practiced at the time. What Packard exposed was merely the tip of the iceberg, which is always the least threatening part. The advertising agencies and p.r. firms that were manipulating public opinion on behalf of their clients were merely a part of a larger, government-funded operation whose goal was the use of communication to dominate, both at home and abroad. According to Christopher Simpson, in his book, *Science of Coercion*,

> Military, intelligence and propaganda agencies such as the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency helped bankroll substantially all of the post-W.W.II generation's research into techniques of persuasion, opinion measurement, interrogation, political and military mobilization, propagation of ideology and related questions. The persuasion studies, in particular[,] provided much of the scientific underpinning for modern advertising and motivational techniques.

The purpose of psychological warfare—later called by the euphemism "communications theory"—was, according to Simpson, "to suppress or distort unauthorized communication among subject peoples, including domestic U.S. dissenters who challenged the wisdom or morality of imperial policies."

With the Nazis defeated, the core group of psychological warriors which staffed the OSS and its related offices was free to define the enemy as it saw fit. Simpson makes perfectly clear that "The targets of U.S. psychological warfare were not only the 'enemy,' but also the people of the Unites States and its allies."

As Plato could have told us, before music could be used as a form of control, it had to be turned into an instrument of cultural revolution, because tyranny has always had revolution as its necessary precondition. Richard Wagner took part in the retreat from Leipzig with Bakunin at the end of the Revolution of '48. A musical revolutionary as well, he compared melody to Metternich and Minna, his first wife. Break the rule of melody, and you can overthrow the state. His way to break the hold of melody was known as chromaticism. You can hear its subversive effect in the later Paris version of *Tannhaueser* but most clearly in *Tristan und Isolde*.

One of the impressionable young people of the time who fell under Wagner's sway was Friedrich Nietzsche. *Birth of Tragedy* was written under the spell of Wagner's *Tristan*

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und Isolde. Freud, in turn, got the Oedipus complex from Nietzsche. Wagner was the new Oedipus, who forced the Sphinx to divulge its secrets.

Another impressionable young man who fell under Wagner's spell was Arnold Schönberg. His brother-in-law Zemlinsky described "Verklärte Nacht," Schönberg's first and most influential piece, as "a smeared version of *Tristan*." "Verklärte Nacht" ("Transfigured Night") was about sexual liberation. Schönberg's wife took the message of Richard Dehmel's poem to heart and had an affair with a painter from Vienna. The affair turned out badly. Schönberg found out; the painter killed himself, and then Schönberg, who had become a Christian, reverted to Judaism and decided to kill Western music. He was fairly successful in this regard, beginning in 1911 with his assault on chromatic harmony, atonality, a direct result of the rage he felt toward his wife. His second, more successful attempt was known as 12-tone music, a system he stole from an eccentric Austrian named Josef Matthias Hauer.

Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno was member of the Frankfurt School and, like Schönberg, a refugee from the Third Reich. Adorno met Schönberg in Hollywood, where he advised Thomas Mann on the writing of his book on music, *Doktor Faustus*. As Alex Ross writes in his *New Yorker* article "Ghost Sonata," Adorno's virtually unreadable *Philosophy of New Music* "wowed the confused young minds who were seeking new certitudes, new laws, new gods." Adorno then took Schönberg's 12-tone musical "straitjacket" back to Germany, where, in the interest of detaching German composers from the Nazi past, the musical operatives of the Information Control Division—an outgrowth of Gen. Robert McClure's Psychological Warfare Division—encouraged the propagation of what one internal memo described as "modern music of the international repertory." To this end, Darmstadt received in 1949 a grant of 8,000 Deutschemarks from American "reorientation funds."

What followed in America was more insidious. I call it Dionysian Muzak, the music of the MTV culture, calculated to arouse the passions as a prelude to economic exploitation and political control. (I have discussed music as a vehicle for revolution in my book *Dionysos Rising*.) Ethnic music, the sort we make ourselves, is a successful antidote to Dionysian Muzak. Ethnic music is ordered music, based on melody, and there is a moral order in melody because, in arousing the emotions and then bringing them back under control, returning them to the note with which they began, melody teaches lessons about the moral order even before the age of reason. Ethnic music is also accessible, which means that amateurs can play it, and it is a source of common melodies that give identity and tear us away from Dionysian Muzak.

After listening to a talk I had given on ethnic music, a young lady told the story of traveling by van to see ancient ruins in Italy. As soon as she and her 14 fellow students got into the van, each of them put on his headset and tuned into his own private concert, successfully isolating himself from everyone around him. The group could have joined together and sung the same song. Instead, recorded music exerted control through isolation. Technology has made this not only possible but inevitable.

We mistakenly tend to associate ethnic music with something called "folk music." As Bob Dylan reminds us in his recently released autobiography, he became "bigger than Elvis" by singing "folk music." Folk music comes to us from two words: *music*, which means music; and *folk*, which means "deracination." In becoming famous, Bob Dylan became a fixture in the music industry, which meant he got cut off from the fertile soil of ethnic music. This is important, because all music is ultimately ethnic.

> Paying other people to produce our culture for us is like hiring other men to sire our children. The children who result from this act will not be our own.

The fallacy of our age—and by recognizing this, Vaughan Williams was 30 years ahead of his time—is that "the genius springs from nowhere, defies all rules, acknowledges no musical ancestry, and is beholden to no tradition." Vaughan Williams could not have had Bob Dylan in mind when he wrote this, but he could not have described his career more accurately, either. The lesson of Vaughan Williams' book is that musical deracination has consequences every bit as destructive as musical rootedness is salutary. Folk music was music that would lead to war, as another Jewish folksinger, Ronald Radosh, made clear in his memoir, *Commies*, and not just at the hands of such Popular Front apologists as Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. Vaughan Williams was prescient enough to see the rise of neocon global imperialism from rootless Dionysian music, over a half a century before it happened. According to Vaughan Williams, who got the idea from G.M. Trevelyan, "the ideal would be for every nation to be different and at peace," but "what we are tending towards is to be all alike and at war." Call it the paradox of globalism, if you will: "[W]e can get our music from Germany, our painting from France, our jokes from America and our dancing from Russia. Has this brought us peace? Does not this colourless cosmopolitanism bring in its train wars, such as our isolated forefathers never dreamed of?"

Ethnic music, however, will only function as an antidote to globalism if people break through the crust of commercial music and MTV culture and make some significant contact with it, and that can only happen if they put down their headsets and start making that music themselves. Vaughan Williams proposed a five-year ban on German music in England. We can propose something similar: a five year ban on recorded music. "What I want to see in England," Vaughan Williams tells us, "is everybody making music—however badly." It is better to play "The Kesh Jig" badly than to listen to an exquisite recording of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, because "even at some immediate sacrifice of good we must develop our own culture to suit our own needs." What I want to see is the same thing—everyone playing ethnic music, even if they play it badly—in the new ethnic America freed from the bad dream of global hegemony.

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Man and Everyman

Assembling the Fragments

by Joseph Pearce

The Abolition of Man, C.S. Lewis's masterful critique of the relativism that was as rampant in his day as it is in ours, represented the culmination of the author's quest for the quintessential meaning of man's being and purpose. Always a diligent searcher after truth, Lewis had climbed a long and arduous path from the faithless rationalism of his youth to the pinnacle of perspective from which *The Abolition of Man* was written. Following in Lewis's footprints will enable us to understand not only the arduous path that he had taken but the ardor with which he trod it.

Lewis's long ascent began from the depths of the valley of doubt into which he had descended following the loss of the lukewarm Christianity of his childhood. "And so," he said, in his autobiographical *Surprised by Joy*, "little by little, with fluctuations which I cannot now trace, I became an apostate, dropping my faith with no sense of loss but with the greatest relief." By 1916, he was dismissing all religions with a 17-year-old's arrogant ignorance, stating superciliously that he believed in no religion because, as he said in correspondence, there was "absolutely no proof for any of them," adding that his atheism was merely a reflection of "the recognized scientific account of the growth of religions." Superstition had always "held the common people, but in every age the educated and thinking ones have stood outside it."

In spite of his superciliousness and his atheism, Lewis never sank into the quagmire of relativism. On July 6, 1922, he wrote in his diary of his intention to write a dissertation on "the hegemony of moral value" and, two years later, read a paper of that title to the Oxford Philosophical Society. He was, therefore, a believer in the Absolute and an advocate of the Permanent Things long before his conversion to Christianity. It was this belief in, and desire for, order that animated his objections to the aesthetic experimentation of the modern poets in general, and of T.S. Eliot in particular.

Lewis's didacticism and his desire for order and formality were at loggerheads aesthetically with the subtlety and obscurantism of Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Lewis was seeking to unify "moral value," bringing all the pieces together according to the harmonizing principle of the Absolute, whereas Eliot was shoring up "fragments" of "broken images," scattering the pieces apparently at random. Appearances can be deceptive, however, and, after many years, Lewis finally came to accept Eliot as a kindred spirit. Eliot's *Modern Education and the Classics*, published in 1934, complemented Lewis's own "Reflections on Education With Special Reference to the Teaching of English," which was the subtitle of *The Abolition of Man*. Both works insisted that education cannot be divorced from morality and that the latter must inform the former. Similarly, Eliot's *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939) and his *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture* (1948) dovetailed with Lewis's position regarding the necessity of Christianity to any genuine restoration of European culture. Most notably, Eliot's poetic depiction of "The Hollow Men," published in 1925, prefigures Lewis's "Men Without Chests" in *The Abolition of Man*. It is indeed a little odd that Lewis remained apparently blind to these multifaceted and multifarious similarities between his own work and that of one whom he deemed an "enemy."

This singular and peculiar blindness extended to other kindred spirits, such as Roy Campbell and Edith Sitwell, both of whom were satirized mercilessly in Lewis's *The Pilgrim's Regress*, the former as the "bearded singer" and the latter as "Victoriana," two of the "Clevers" in Eschropolis. Lewis also attacked Roy Campbell in his poem "To the Author of *Flowering Rifle*" and, as with his belated friendship with Eliot, would only later recognize his affinity with one whom he had presumed to be an enemy. Similarly, although he had dismissed her so acrimoniously in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, I cannot imagine Lewis failing to appreciate Edith Sitwell's later poems, such as "Still Falls the Rain" or "The Shadow of Cain," the latter of which, being the first of her "three poems of the Atomic Age," resonates profoundly and disturbingly with the diabolical scientism of the N.I.C.E. in Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*. "The Shadow of Cain" was written in 1945, the same year in which *That Hideous Strength* was published, and both works share the same "merely Christian" response to the destructive triumph of technology over humanity in the "atomic" age. Lewis's original inspiration for the N.I.C.E—the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments—had been the controversy surrounding the founding of an atomic plant near Blewbury, 15 miles from Oxford. Sitwell's "Shadow of Cain" was inspired by the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and was about "the fission of the world into warring particles, destroying and self-destructive." Both works also employed the imagery of coldness as a metaphor for the atomic age long before the post-war nuclear impasse became known as the "Cold War." One of the diabolical materialists in *That Hideous Strength* is named Frost, accentuating the chilling hardness of his characterization, whereas Sitwell characterized her poem as a description of "the gradual migration of mankind . . . into the desert of the Cold, towards the final disaster, the first symbol of which fell on Hiroshima." According to Sitwell, the first two pages of her poem "were partly a physical description of the highest degree of cold, partly a spiritual description of this."

> We did not heed the Cloud in the Heavens shaped like the hand

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Of Man . . .
the Primal Matter
Was broken, the womb from which all life began.
Then to the murdered Sun a totem pole of dust arose
in memory of Man.

In these lines, the similarities between Lewis's work and Sitwell's are made manifest, from the plaintive description of the Promethean arrogance of scientism, which is the "hideous strength" of the N.I.C.E., to the sobering consequences of such hideous strength in the abolition of man himself.

There was, in Lewis's own mind, a close relationship between *The Abolition of Man* and *That Hideous Strength*. Both were written in 1943, although the latter would not be published until two years later, and Lewis makes a distinct connection between them in his Preface to *That Hideous Strength*: "This is a 'tall story' about devilry, though it has behind it a serious 'point' which I have tried to make in my *Abolition of Man*." Free will is the strength at the heart of man, but, at the same time, it is the weakness at the heart of man. If the will is ordered in its freedom—if it is in harmony with the Will of the One who bestowed it in the first place—it is man's greatest strength. If, on the other hand, it is disordered, rebelling against the Divine Will, it becomes his greatest weakness. Paradoxically, however, the weakness is strong, in the sense that it has great destructive—and, ultimately, self-destructive—power. At the moment that it ceases to be the true freedom that, as Edmund Burke insisted, "must be limited in order to be possessed," it becomes the anarchy that, as Oscar Wilde so memorably asserted, is "freedom's own Judas." Man betrays himself with a kiss when he kisses the mirror.

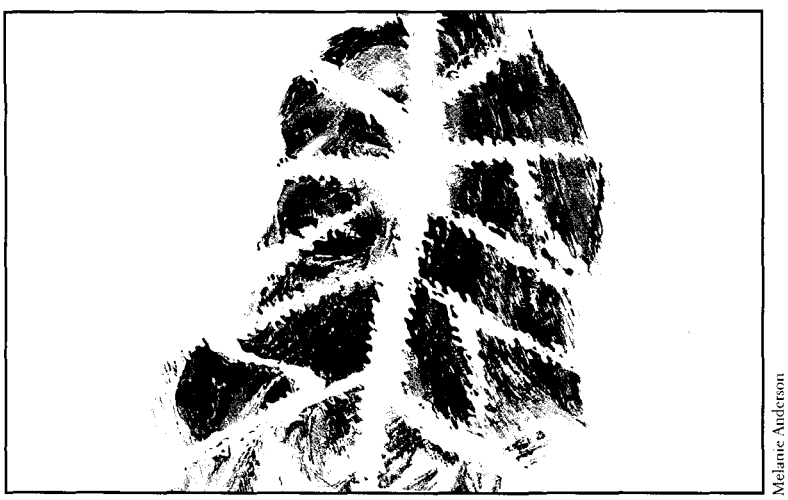
This Promethean self-centeredness is man's "hideous strength." And pride is at the root of the philosophical relativism that leads to the abolition of man. Put simply, the philosophical errors exposed by Lewis in *The Abolition of Man* lead to the diabolical idolization of science or "progress" that is the destructive driving force behind the N.I.C.E. in *That Hideous Strength*.

None of this is original to Lewis, of course; it is as old as Original Sin itself. It is, however, all-too-often forgotten in our meretriciously myopic age. Lewis himself, as a young atheist, had not been averse to an element of "progressive" idolization of science, genuflecting before "the recognized scientific account of the growth of religions." He was led away from such scientism, in large part, by the benign influence of G.K. Chesterton, so much so that it is easy to trace the intellectual roots of *The Abolition of Man* and *That Hideous Strength* to ideas that Lewis might have learned from his reading of Chesterton.

Lewis first read Chesterton while convalescing from an attack of "trench fever" in a British Red Cross field hospital at Le Treport in France during World War I. In *Surprised by Joy*, he notes:

> I had never heard of him and had no idea of what he stood for; nor can I quite understand why he made such an immediate conquest of me. It might have been expected that my pessimism, my atheism, and my hatred of sentiment would have made him to me the least congenial of all authors. It would almost seem that Providence, or some 'second cause' of a very obscure kind, quite over-rules our previous tastes when It decides to bring two minds together. Liking an author may be as involuntary and improbable as falling in love . . . In reading Chesterton, as in reading [George] Macdonald, I did not know what I was letting myself in for. A young man who wishes to remain a sound Atheist cannot be too careful of his reading. There are traps everywhere . . . God is, if I may say it, very unscrupulous.

In the years after World War I, Lewis continued to read the works of Chesterton voraciously without ever succumbing to the fullness of their veracity. "Chesterton had more sense than all the moderns put together; bating, of course, his Christianity." Even as he was treating contemporaries such as Eliot, Campbell, and Sitwell with unmerited contempt, Lewis was allowing Chesterton's religious orthodoxy to drip-feed itself into his heart without ever consciously admitting it into his head. "Then I read Chesterton's *Everlasting Man* and for the first time saw the whole Christian outline of history set out in a form that seemed to make sense."



Melanie Anderson

Chesterton had written *The Everlasting Man* as a response and riposte to H.G. Wells' *The Outline of History*. Wells' work, ostensibly an objective account of the history of the world, was, in fact, a retelling of history according to Wells' own philosophy of materialistic determinism. Its overriding presumption was that human society is "progressing" toward perfection and that, in consequence, the past is always and necessarily inferior to the present, as the present is necessarily inferior to the future. Wells believed that human "progress" was blind, beneficial, and utterly unstoppable and inexorable. He perceived history as the product of invisible and immutable evolutionary forces that were coming to fruition in the 20th century. The history of man had begun in caves and was reaching a climax in the modern age with the triumph of science over religion. This, in turn, heralded a new dawn, a brave new world where happiness would be ushered in by technology. Wells' *Outline of History* had an immense and immediate impact. It was lauded by those who shared his philosophy as a thoroughly modern view of history, unshackled by the prejudices and superstitions of the past. It was history as if God did not matter. In 1923, Joy Davidman (who was destined many years later to become Lewis's wife) had read *The Outline of History* as an impressionable eight-year-old and had immediately declared herself an atheist.

Although Chesterton does not address Wells' work directly,

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it is clear that *The Everlasting Man* represents an alternative "outline of history" intended as an antidote to Wells' book and a rebuttal of his deterministic "progressive" thesis. In essence, Chesterton was insisting that man is essentially unchanging, that human society is not "progressing" inexorably, and that the health of any human society is directly dependent on the practice of virtue and the avoidance of sin. A virtuous society might be said to be progressing, and a sinful society might be said to be regressing; since, however, sin and virtue are dependent on the freedom of the will, there is nothing "blind" or "inexorable" about human history or destiny.

Chesterton's book could also be seen as a response to George Bernard Shaw's "progressive" Nietzscheanism, particularly in such plays as *Man and Superman*. Contrary to the Shavian or Wellsian belief that man is evolving or progressing into an *Übermensch*, Chesterton insisted that man is always in stasis; he is best understood in relation to Everyman, the archetype of his perennial unchanging self as observed through history and through the literature of the ages. The answer to the fallacy of *Man and Superman* was the felicity of *Man and Everyman*.

The triumph of Chesterton over Wells can be seen in Lewis's work by the negative characterization of those who espouse the Wellsian *Weltanschauung*. In *Out of the Silent Planet* and, to a lesser extent, in *Perelandra*, the character of Dr. Weston is unmistakably a parody of Wells and others of his ilk, such as Shaw, J.B.S. Haldane, and Olaf Stapledon. Perhaps more specifically, Weston can be seen as a parody of one of Wells' or Stapledon's fictional heroes. In *That Hideous Strength*, Horace Jules is clearly meant to remind us of Wells, though the name also suggests an allusive nod in the direction of Jules Verne. Mr. Jules is described as a "cockney," a clear allusion to Wells' lower-middle-class origins on the outskirts of London, whose "novels had first raised him to fame and affluence." The ideas that Jules expounds with self-opinionated zeal are close and clear reflections of those espoused by Wells. Lewis shows that Jules' naive philosophy of optimistic scientism is not merely deficient rationally but is being used by more sinister and, ultimately, demonic forces. Bad philosophy and its exponents become servants of evil.

If the villainous characters of Jules and Weston can be seen, in part at least, as fictional personifications of Wells, the hero of Lewis's space trilogy, Dr. Elwin Ransom, described as a middle-aged philologist of Cambridge University, can be seen as a fictional personification of Lewis's great friend J.R.R. Tolkien, who, when Lewis was writing his space trilogy, was a middle-aged philologist at Oxford. "As a philologist I may have some part in him," Tolkien, speaking of Ransom, wrote to his son Christopher, "and recognize some of my opinions and ideas Lewisified in him." It was singularly apt that Lewis should pay tribute to his friend in this way, not least because Tolkien was perhaps the most important influence, with the possible exception of Chesterton and George Macdonald, on Lewis's ascent from faithlessness to faith. In what must have been the most important single conversation in Lewis's life, at Oxford in September 1931, Tolkien had convinced Lewis that myths are not "beautiful lies and therefore worthless," as Lewis had maintained; on the contrary, they contained "splintered fragments" of the One True Light and, as such, were priceless beacons of illumination in a darkened world. Within days of this conversation, Lewis announced that he had finally come to accept the Christian God.

The conversation with Tolkien can be seen to have influenced the discussion of the *Tao* in *The Abolition of Man*, principally in the sense in which Lewis insists that the convergence of belief in various religions and myths illustrates that each contains these "splintered fragments" of truth. The underlying harmony and uniformity of the various belief systems handed down through the centuries of human experience points to their ultimate fulfillment in the One Truth, which is revealed in Christ. The experience of man points to Everyman; and Everyman is perfected in Christ.

The Bird of Poetry
by Sally Cook

The brilliant bird of poetry
No longer sits atop the tree,
But acts it's multicolored rage
By thrashing of the foliage.

Poetic Bird, idiosyncratic.
Tangled in brambles bureaucratic.
Oh, sing again in tones melodious;
Reject the self indulgent odious

Endless song of me, me, me!
Your sad decline we grieve to see.
Such birds have ears, assailed by squeak;
They mutter of the great Art Speak.

That such a one could fly the coop—
Avoid becoming chicken soup!

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Presents

An International Conference

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The Honorable James Bissett—Former Canadian ambassador to Yugoslavia and former director of Canada's Immigration Foreign Service

Dr. Thomas Fleming—President of The Rockford Institute, editor-in-chief of *Chronicles*, author of *The Politics of Human Nature*, *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, and, most recently, *The Morality of Everyday Life*

Dr. Samuel Francis—Washington editor for *Chronicles*, syndicated columnist, and author of *Beautiful Losers* and *Revolution From the Middle*

Col. Ronald Hatchett, USAF Ret.—Former Reagan administration weapons negotiator, former director of the Center of International Studies, University of Saint Thomas, Houston

Dr. Stephen Presser—Legal-affairs editor for *Chronicles* and Raoul Berger Professor of Legal History at Northwestern University School of Law

Dr. Michael Stenton—Modern European historian and lecturer for the Board of Continuing Education, Cambridge University

The Honorable Darko Tanaskovic—Ambassador of Serbia Montengro to the Holy See

Dr. Srdja Trifkovic—Foreign-affairs editor for *Chronicles*, director of The Rockford Institute's Center for International Affairs, and author of *Sword of the Prophet: Islam—History, Theology, Impact on the World*

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Of Masons, Magic, Monks, Medicine, and Marriage

by Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.

My maternal grandfather was a very practical man, an entrepreneur with a self-made fortune, a local mayor, philo-Dixiecrat, devoted to his wife and three daughters. His habitual reading was the Raleigh paper and the local small-town daily (which, by some miracle, still exists). He died when I was very small, and so I never had the good fortune to know him well. His house, however, and especially its attic, had enough in it for me to have a certain clear impression of him, his tastes, and his accomplishments. Or so I felt for some years. The serenely accumulated notion I had of him was shaken one day in my middle-school years when, on a visit to my grandmother, I pulled from his still-untouched library shelf a volume entitled *Morals and Dogma*. To me, these terms, when paired, had a distinctly Catholic ring, and so I was eager to see if my grandfather had had some Romish tendencies after all, something about as likely as his being a registered Republican. I opened the book at random, without examining the title page or table of contents. This is what I read:

> To science nothing is impossible . . . it disposes at will of all forms, and distributes beauty and deformity as it pleases: it changes in turn with the rod of Circe, men into brutes and animals into men: it even disposes of life and death . . . This is what magic had been . . . when positive Christianity publicly crushed this philosophy with its anathemas, and compelled it to become more occult and more mysterious than ever. At the bottom of magic, nevertheless, was science . . . Magic is the exact and absolute science of Nature and its laws.

Amazed and given the creeps, I turned to the front of the book, which read: *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, published in Charleston A.M. 5632. My grandfather's possession of such a book was explained by the words in the Preface: "*It is specially intended to be read and studied by the Brethren of that obedience, in connection with the rituals of the degrees. It is hoped and expected that each will furnish himself with a copy and make himself familiar with it.*" The passage I had first read was in the instruction for the 28th degree, and I had heard and even seen from some Masonic liturgical decorations in the attic that Granddaddy had reached the 32nd. Had he actually studied this? Had he taken it seriously?

My recent education in California had, happily, prepared me for incongruities. My fifth-grade teacher was a Missouri-Synod Lutheran, John Bircher, and square-dance instructress, as well as a bridge pro and a smoker. My sixth-grade teacher was a carrot-juice-drinking organizer for Shirley Chisolm (R.I.P.) and part-time secretary for a psychic; she was married to a physicist at a prestigious faculty, gave tarot-card readings, and had a very tall black male friend who used to pick her up from school wearing a *dashiki* and driving an MG. I kid you not. In eighth grade, by the way, I was reassured by an English and piano teacher who was an Anglican-turned-follower-of-Paramahansa Yogananda that I needn't worry about conflicting claims of truth because, after all, "all is one." My Southern grandfather's religious and social profile was (minus, of course, any Teutonic Midwestern earnestness) more like the fifth-grade teacher, but, after my discovery, I began to wonder if he hadn't some connection to the wild, witchy world of the sixth-grade teacher. I had a natural aversion to the quasiapostate indifferentism of the eighth-grade Hindu, and so her notions did not enter in to my evaluation of the Masonic magic I had discovered on my ancestor's bookshelf.

I am sure that Masonic rituals were to my grandfather and grandmother as the title *Pontifex Maximus* was to SS. Constantine and Helena—a polite form, necessary by convention, for those who were otherwise serious about Christianity. But the notion of magic with which Pike's *Morals and Dogma* was filled (I had kept on reading in spite of the creepy feeling) continued to perplex me, since it was so explicitly related to a certain conception of science and progress. The resolution of this *aporia* had to wait for the day when, as a priest, I had to speak to some students who were not much older than I was when I happened upon the cryptic manual on that sultry July afternoon.

A lay teacher of a senior-year ethics course at a nearby private high school called, asking if I would come and talk to his classes on the subject of witchcraft and demonology. He regarded his students' curiosity as unwholesome, and he thought the added authority of a clergyman would help to disabuse them of their interest and credulity. I made it clear that I was no expert on such things but that I would be happy to prepare a helpful talk for his seniors after some research. What I then discovered, I now relate. I ended up giving a very different talk from the one I had vaguely conceived.

There are two papal bulls dealing with witchcraft in Cardinal Gasparri's collection of sources of canon law, *Fontes*, published by the Vatican press in 1923. The first, *Summis desiderantes*, promulgated by Innocent VIII in 1484, gave general faculties to the Dominican friars Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger to conduct inquisitions into the practice of witchcraft. What were the occult practices to be rooted out? The bull descends to particulars: "to have abusive relations with demons, extinguish the offspring of women, impede men from

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Father Hugh is prior of St. Michael's Abbey in Trabuco Canyon, California.

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generating, women from conceiving, men from being able to render conjugal rights to wives, and wives to their husbands." The second bull, called *Omnipotentis Dei* and promulgated by Gregory XV in 1623, distinguished for the secular arm between crimes committed by means of witchcraft that were capital and crimes that demanded only perpetual incarceration. Among the former, the principal was the murder inflicted by recourse to demons called abortion; among the latter were preternaturally induced "divorces and infertility."

Then I got hold of a copy of the manual for witch-hunters written by the two Dominicans named above, the *Malleus Maleficarum* or "hammer of witches." Every aspect of the lives and activity of witches was described and explained from Scripture, tradition, and experience. Practically the whole work of witches, according to these 15th-century experts, concerned procreation—either impeding it or accomplishing it in unnatural ways. Infanticide, abortion, contraception, insemination—these were the day-to-day business of the magic art.

Art is just the Latin for the Greek *techne*. Magic is one of the arts, a kind of technology, but one that, according to Saint Thomas in his fourth *Quodlibet*, may be known but never used, since its means, and also usually its end, are evil. The 17th-century manual of philosophy by the Sorbonne's Antoine Goudin (which was still being published at Viterbo in 1856 with its robust defense of the Ptolemaic system!) puts it thus:

> Art is able to bring about the works and movements of nature, not indeed by its own power and artificial forms, but by using natural forces. This is proven by reason and experience. By reason, for often a natural power is subject to art for its application, thus art can apply it and so produce its effects. By experience also, for a physician heals thus by applying natural remedies through his art . . . thus also demons who know exactly all the properties of animals, herbs, rocks, metals, and minerals can produce various and amazing things through natural powers.

What the students heard was that, in years gone by, those things were commonly thought to be brought about by recourse to demons that now are obtained by medical technology by unaided human research, the only difference being that our art is more effective than the magic technology of benighted witches. This is not what the teacher expected, a strange kind of "pro-life" lecture. He did not seem too pleased. I was never invited back.

Here in medical technology was, once again, precisely what was asserted in the Scottish-Rite catechism, a science that "disposes at will of all forms, and distributes beauty and deformity as it pleases . . . it even disposes of life and death." Further, "this is what magic had been . . . when positive Christianity publicly crushed this philosophy with its anathemas, and compelled it to become more occult and more mysterious than ever. At the bottom of magic, nevertheless, was science."

There is no need to go into the question of whether witches really could accomplish what they claimed, or whether witch-hunters were always reasonable and just. What is undeniable is that the modern technology that outrages natural procreation has the same ends as the old arts of witchcraft, even if it employs different means. In other words, with doctors like these, who needs witch doctors? To complete the parallel, both witchcraft and the illicit use of scientific technologies share an implacable hostility to Christianity. Christians still return the favor and seek to stamp these practices out. We should not be so offended when our efforts are described as "witch-hunts." Perhaps that is what they really are.

There is another moral aspect to today's medical magic. The passage from *Morals and Dogma* made this claim about that magic which is really science: "it changes in turn with the rod of Circe, men into brutes and animals into men." Recourse to demons is against the First Commandment. If modern technology removes this "necessity," then to what species of sin can its procreative arts be reduced? Here, Alphonsus Ligouri's *Theologia Moralis* comes in handy as always. In the fourth tractate of the third book, we read words guaranteed to disgust the pride of any demon:

> Bestiality which is the gravest among all sins against chastity is that intercourse in which not even the identity of species is maintained . . . Well did Busenbaum assert that relations with a demon is reducible to the sin of bestiality[;] with him concur Tamburinus, Bonacina and the Salmanticenses with Cajetan.

To attempt to conceive life outside of relations between a man and a woman places the fact and instant of procreation outside the human species, even if it is a human being that is being conceived by magic or medical art. It is science "turning men into brutes." The witches claimed to convey human seed great distances to be used to produce unnatural conceptions. Now, this is a common, even relatively "low-tech" procedure. On the "high-tech" end, Japanese researchers are developing an artificial womb that would ideally allow a full gestation. "Pro-lifers" who offer their wombs to "adopt" embryos should think twice about the formal moral equivalents to what they are doing. Does the end justify the means? The witches thought so.

How to get out from under this spell? This is a hard question to answer. In Ligouri's manual, in the first tractate of the third book, he recommends two remedies to those who have been involved in witchcraft: first, recourse to legitimate medical art; second, the prayers of the Church. The first remedy is not available in this case, since it is life itself, the very end of medical technology, that has been turned into a kind of human witchery. But prayer there is, and it is powerful.

There is also a third remedy offered by the great moralist—namely, the "destruction of the signs whereby the demon does harm." Nowadays, these signs are signs of absence, the absence of children born of faithful marriage. More children—that will break the curse as nothing else will. *Ora et procrea*—not too far from *Ora et labora*, is it? The witches, new and old, have united the friars and families in common cause, so "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder." Granddaddy would have been surprised to know he was closer to the monastic than to the Masonic brethren, but he is surely happy to be so now. I hope my middle-school teachers have learned their lesson by now, too, although this monastic must concede that the earnest Midwestern dancing, card-playing Missouri-Synod smoker paleocon was more or less right from the start. I can hear the strains yet: "And though this world with devils filled, / should threaten to undo us . . ."

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No Graven Images

by Harold O.J. Brown

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . .
Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them . . .
—Exodus 20:4,5

In the fourth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, Satan tempts Jesus with the offer of "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." This is the third of his temptations, and perhaps the one that was the most difficult to resist, for he was tempting the Savior to take a quick shortcut to possess what He would gain through suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus answered, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). Today, the Christian Church that survived war and persecution is in an unanticipated danger, the danger of being "surfeited with dainties," to use Calvin's colorful expression. Having withstood the lash, She is suffocating under toys and delicacies. Idols of the past were often cruel; today, they are sweet. It has been centuries since those of us in what used to be called Western Christendom have been tempted to worship graven images. Today, however, millions of us have bowed down and served other idols of human making.

There is a hymn in the old Harvard College hymnal with the lines, "Deep sands of time divide thy golden days from mine, / Thy voice comes strange o'er years of change, / How can we follow thee?" The hymn concludes with the hopeful promise, "Go, Lord, we follow thee."

Unfortunately, it seems to have become increasingly difficult for us as children of the Enlightenment; of revolutions violent and industrial; of materialism, both sophisticatedly philosophical and crassly greedy, to hear that voice and discern the footsteps of that Lord in the shifting sands of time. We no longer have a cruel leader, at least not such as the Germans and Russians did, but we are learning not to care, because we have so many things to divert us. For Christians, the struggle is no longer between God and Mammon (Matthew 6:24), but between Jesus and the Market.

German theologian Karl Heim (1870-1958), attempting to explain what Jesus is and should be to Christians, wrote of the common human desire for a leader. This desire is all too easily misdirected into following a *Führer* (leader) into destruction. Even we iconoclastic Americans are not immune to this sort of emotion. Do not hearts thrill when "Hail to the Chief" announces the arrival of the president of the United States? "Hail to the Chief" in German is "*Heil dem Führer*," a thought that may reinforce in our minds the importance of The Rockford Institute's motto, "Put not your trust in princes" (Psalm 146:3). Inasmuch as that thrill affected even my "red"-tinged heart when the music resounded at the entry of our last "blue" president, Bill Clinton, it may also effect "blue" Democratic voters today. Today, however, there is no false leader to blind us as Hitler did the Germans. We have a different problem.

The *Führerprinzip* (leader principle) proclaimed by Hitler has no real power over most Americans, whose human idols come more from entertainment than from politics. The maximum leaders today in Cuba, in China, in North Korea, and, until recently, in Iraq want a certain idolatrous worship, but even they do not demand human sacrifice—not the ripped-out, bleeding hearts required by the idols of the Aztecs or the burned babies required by Carthaginian Moloch. The dangerous idols of today, those that do demand human sacrifice, are not made with hands but by human minds. The idols of the recent past sought to ensnare us with hero worship; the new idol is drowning us in luxury and ease.

French jurist and lay theologian Jacques Ellul did not envisage the "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world . . . spiritual wickedness in high places" of Ephesians 6:12 as the devils or demons of medieval art. He saw them as the political and ideological structures that can take on an almost personal character. There were structures of thought, ideologies that could first fascinate, then inspire, enslave, and finally destroy. What we confront today is an idolatrous structure of material and intellectual productivity that buries us alive.

The dangerous idols of the past claimed total allegiance, professing to solve all of the problems of social life and, ultimately, to reveal the meaning of existence. The idol today is not "graven" like the statuary of the Nazis and the communists and, therefore, is harder to recognize and insidiously more dangerous. The great idols of the recent past sought to restructure society, perhaps the whole world, and to give all of life, at least for the nations that they shaped, a new sense of meaning and destiny. Ill-fated Italian fascism sought to assume the heritage of *Roma aeterna*, the Rome of the Caesars, not that of the popes. Although, in the eyes of his detractors, Benito Mussolini may appear a clown, for a time he was taken seriously. He thought, and many believed, that he really could be a new Caesar. Mussolini took the word *fascism* from the *fasces*, the bundle of rods around an ax that symbolized authority in ancient Rome. Fascism did not last long enough to realize its dreams, and its future was cut short by Mussolini's folly both in attempting the achievements of the Romans with too few men and too little time and in choosing Hitler as a model.

Nazism, a decade younger and crueler, sought to restructure all of German life on the basis of race and blood. As Eric Voegelin writes in *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, those who want to change everything and make it all new, to transform what he calls the "Order of Being," must first of all kill God, the Author of that order. Marxism and Nazism had in com-

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mon an outright rejection of the God of Christianity. Marxism was explicitly committed to atheistic materialism, the other dreaming of ancient myths. Nazism did not act to suppress Christianity but tried to supplant it with something more Aryan and Germanic. The Christian churches were not closed; the Protestants were transformed as far as possible into the *Deutsche Christen*, and the Catholics were largely coopted. Jesus was Aryanized. Heinrich Himmler and the SS wanted to resurrect a vision of the Nordic gods, but it did not catch on; the total defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 left no one ready to be a martyr for Wodin and Valhalla.

Marxism was more direct, more systematic. It sought effectively to blot out all memory of God from public life; Christians were still allowed to sing and to pray, as long as they did it quietly and unobtrusively in their own quarters and made no attempt to evangelize. Atheistic propaganda was promoted.

Nazism has been wiped from the stage of history; the little groups of neo-Nazis that spring up from time to time are noteworthy only for their nastiness. Their vision has nothing of the comprehensiveness of Hitler's "New Order." They hardly rank as idols. Marxism has been wiped from the political stage in that part of the world that we call Western Christendom, although it survives politically in Asia and intellectually in Western academies.

Idols are expected to give gifts; the Marxist idols have failed. The experience of half a century of competing systems operating adjacent to one another—the Bundesrepublik over against the Deutsche Demokratische Republik in Europe; North and South Korea in Asia—has revealed the total inability of communist central planning to produce the wealth that people crave. Our markets satisfy such craving. Satiated, no one "panteth after thee, O God" (Psalm 42:1).

Communist China after Mao has succeeded in preserving totalitarian tyranny while creating wealth by adopting principles of a market economy. The astonishing growth of Christianity in communist China shows the truth of the biblical statement "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4). Perhaps the Chinese have not had bread long enough, or in sufficient quantity, to be satiated; perhaps we in the West have. With isolated exceptions, Christianity has been effectively stifled in Europe and, increasingly, in North America—not by the virulently secularist antifaiths of Marxism and Nazism but by the indifferently secular substitute of capitalism and the abundance that it has given us.

In *The Epoch of Secularization* (1971), Augusto Del Noce warns against the dangers of capitalism. That great engine of economic productivity and material wealth that reemerged from war-blasted West Germany and Japan and has continued to flourish in the West has never opposed Christianity or any religion in principle, but, as Del Noce shows, it is increasingly effective in smothering it in practice. The Nazis told the Germans, "Forget God and Jesus, believe in Wotan and Thor!" The Marxists shouted, "Religion is the opiate of the masses." Neither Aryan dreams nor Marxist oppression, however, proved able to blot out Christianity. Many Christians surrendered, churches faltered and closed, but the Faith survived.

Christians have always known that they must face opposition and oppression. Enduring to the end and waiting for the ultimate reward in Heaven is easier to sustain against active opposition when the opposition can offer few (if any) rewards on earth. Faithfulness becomes increasingly difficult, however, when mammon overwhelms us with this-worldy gratifications and rewards. Capitalism and the free market succeed in thoroughly diverting people's attention from the things that endure to the things that are of the world. Christians in the West are becoming so "surfeited with dainties" in the over-abundant free market that they are losing all appetite for the truly nourishing meat and potatoes of faith in the God of Abraham, the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

It is unfortunate that Del Noce's insights are available only in Italian or in a recent French translation, *L'Époque de la sécularisation*. He might wake American Christians up to the fact that the opulence bestowed by capitalism is enticing us away from the Faith that persecution did not crush. Already in the late 1960's, Del Noce saw what was happening as Europe emerged from World War II. The Faith that had survived the adversities of war and poverty began to vanish under the avalanche of goods and pleasures.

Melanie Anderson

The late German-emigré economist Wilhelm Röpke helped postwar West Germany choose the free market instead of the planned economy recommended by American Democrats and British Labour, and the *Wirtschaftwunder* (economic miracle) arose, gradually doing to faith what Hitler could not do. In *A Humane Economy*, Röpke gave a warning that has gone unheeded. The market, he says, produces goods in quantity, but it does not produce values: It consumes them.

Del Noce explains how this happens. Even in the Italy of 30 years ago, consumers were buried under an avalanche of material products. The profusion of things to buy produces permanent diversion and distraction. The expansion of credit makes it possible not merely to desire new toys of every kind but to obtain them, after which consumers became the prisoners of their own purchasing power.

When Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24), that false god had not yet taken on the dimensions that he has today. Nazism and Marxism detested Christianity but failed to destroy it, much less to bury it. Successful free-market capitalism does not detest Christianity, but it is defeating it nonetheless. It is not burning it in the ovens of the Kazetts or burying it in the mass graves of the Gulag. Instead, it smothers believers under the mass of the goods that they cannot resist acquiring. It would be a bizarre turn of world history if the system that produced the dangerous weapons to defeat the aggressive foes of Christianity ends by producing the enticing goods that will smother the surviving Christians. ⊂

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Dealing With a Nuclear Iran

Acceptance and Deterrence

by Ted Galen Carpenter

Iran's agreement to "suspend" her nuclear program in exchange for economic benefits from the European Union has dampened that crisis for the moment. The Bush administration's vocal skepticism about the agreement, however, suggests that the crisis has not been defused. Moreover, Iran emphasizes that her nuclear activities have only been suspended, not abolished. That is precisely the same distinction North Korea made when she signed her 1994 agreement with the United States, and we are now in the midst of a new confrontation with that country over her renewed quest for nuclear weapons.

We do not have definitive evidence that Iran's nuclear program is for the purpose of developing nuclear weapons. It is possible that the Iranians are telling the truth—that they are simply pursuing a program for peaceful power generation. Departing Secretary of State Colin Powell is probably right, though, that Tehran has embarked on a program to build nuclear weapons and is rapidly developing ballistic missiles as a delivery system. U.S. policy needs to take into account that very real possibility. We should not, indeed dare not, adopt a policy based on an excessively optimistic scenario.

Why would Iran want to build nuclear weapons? In attempting to answer that question, we need to look at why the vast majority of countries decide to remain non-nuclear. Only a small number have ventured down the path, and some of them have turned around before the end. South Africa is a notable example.

There are important reasons why most countries choose not to acquire a nuclear-weapons capability. For one thing, it is very expensive. The opportunity cost is regarded as prohibitive. Occasionally, a poor country such as North Korea will be willing to make a nuclear-weapons program the highest priority, but most governments will not make the sacrifice. A decision to go nuclear also has important adverse diplomatic repercussions. Trying to build a nuclear arsenal is not the way to win friends in the international community. Most governments become extremely agitated when a country seeks to break out of the nonproliferation system, and any would-be nuclear power has to take that hostility into consideration. Finally, by trying to acquire a nuclear arsenal, a country may trigger or exacerbate a regional arms race and, at the end of the process, be no more secure than at the beginning—and, perhaps, even less secure.

On the other hand, there are some important reasons why a country might decide to go nuclear. One is prestige. The global nuclear-weapons club is a very exclusive association. All five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council are nuclear-weapons states, and a sixth, India, is likely to become a permanent member in the next few years. Countries that have nuclear weapons are treated differently from non-nuclear powers. Before they became nuclear powers in 1998, India and Pakistan were treated with little respect by other international actors. India was considered a chronic Third World underachiever; Pakistan, a problem state—if not a potential failed state. Those countries are treated far differently now.

Another motive to go nuclear is to deter or intimidate a regional adversary. That appeared to be a consideration for both India and Pakistan. India had long sought to overawe her smaller neighbor, and possessing a nuclear arsenal eventually became part of that strategy. Pakistan, in turn, concluded that she had to neutralize India's growing conventional military advantage as well as her new nuclear capability. A nuclear deterrent was the most decisive and cost-effective way to achieve that goal. Beyond her regional rivalry with Pakistan, India was also concerned about the rising military power of China, as India's then-minister of defense George Fernandes emphasized.

In addition to the motive of deterrence within a region, there is a potential motive of broader deterrence—especially to deter the United States. Here, we need to be realistic about the unintended consequences of some U.S. actions. The United States has taken major military action on nine occasions since the end of the Cold War. That is an extraordinary record of belligerence, and, although many Americans may think that those episodes were justified, other countries do not necessarily see it the same way. In particular, countries such as Iran and North Korea have seen how the United States has treated such non-nuclear adversaries as Serbia and Iraq, and that may have led to the conclusion that a prudent deterrence strategy required a nuclear capability.

So what are Iran's possible motives to go nuclear? Prestige is certainly one consideration—a factor even when the shah was in power. Prestige does not appear to be the dominant reason in Iran's case today. Deterrence, both regional and extraregional, seems to be a more important consideration. The region surrounding Iran is volatile and hostile, and Russia, Israel, Pakistan, and India all have nuclear weapons.

Iran very likely is also reacting to U.S. actions. President Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech, linking Iran to Iraq and North Korea, came as a prelude to an invasion and occupation of Iraq. A policymaker in Tehran (or Pyongyang) might well assume that his country will be on the U.S. hit list at some point.

In addition to President Bush's hostile rhetoric, the United States has deployed her forces in ways that many Iranians find menacing. U.S. troops are already in several Persian Gulf states and have been in that region since the first Gulf War. Addition-

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al forces have now been deployed to some of the Central Asian republics, to Afghanistan, and, of course, to Iraq. To leaders in Tehran, those moves look suspiciously like an encirclement strategy. Iran's apparent response in wanting to build nuclear weapons is not irrational; it is quite logical.

Given such motives, what are the chances of getting Iran to relent? The European strategy—bribery, not to be too polite about it—might work. One can certainly hope that the agreement negotiated with Tehran by the three principal E.U. powers in November 2004 will achieve its goal. It is certainly more likely to work than is the U.S. strategy of isolation and pressure, which has repeatedly failed.

The even more aggressive strategy that has been proposed by some supporters of the Bush administration, to push for regime change, is not likely to work without a massive and risky application of U.S. military power. Regime change in Iran, if it could be achieved at all, would come at a very substantial price in terms of blood and treasure and, as we have seen in Iraq, could also produce some extremely unpleasant side effects. It is an option that should not be adopted casually. Moreover, there is no guarantee that even a democratic Iranian government would give up the quest for nuclear weapons, since the factors of prestige and regional deterrence would still exist.

What, then, do we do if Iran cannot be bribed, pressured, or threatened into changing her course? One option would be to impose comprehensive economic sanctions, authorized by the U.N. Security Council. There are problems with that strategy, however. First of all, there are key powers in the international system—most notably France, Russia, and China—who are unlikely to go along with sanctions. Any one of those powers, as a permanent member of the Security Council, could veto a sanctions resolution. And even if those countries went along with U.S. policy, economic sanctions have had an unimpressive record of accomplishing their stated goals.

A second option would be the use of military force against known or suspected nuclear sites, either directly by the United States or by outsourcing that job to Israel. Regardless of which method was used, it would be a distinction without a difference. If Israel attacks Iran's nuclear installations, the United States is going to be blamed, especially by the Muslim world. Washington is so closely identified with Israeli policy in the region that there is no way we will have plausible deniability. Moreover, the use of military force is a tremendously dangerous strategy. Terrorist retaliation against the perpetrators of such attacks would be almost certain, and air strikes against Iran could even trigger a regional war.

There is a third option that we need to consider. That option is a strategy of acceptance combined with deterrence. Oddly enough, Americans seem to have lost a great deal of confidence in deterrence in recent years. Exhibit A is what the United States did to Iraq. The argument of the Bush administration and its supporters was that if Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction—and, in that case, we were talking about chemical and biological weapons, which are not truly weapons of mass destruction—the United States was justified in launching a preemptive war. If Saddam had those weapons, the reasoning went, we could not rely on deterrence.

That was always a very odd assumption. The United States has over 3,000 weapons in her strategic arsenal, and that is more than enough to deter any rational nation-state. Moreover, consider the regimes we have deterred in the past. The United States deterred a succession of Soviet rulers starting with Joseph Stalin. We deterred Maoist China. Why, then, do some people assume that we cannot deter the regime in Tehran?

The United States has more than enough weapons to deter any rational nation-state. The United States deterred a succession of Soviet rulers starting with Joseph Stalin. We deterred Maoist China. Why, then, do some people assume that we cannot deter the regime in Tehran?

It is not that the mullahs are more brutal than Stalin and Mao. As a colleague of mine has pointed out, Mao and Stalin were the gold and silver medalists in the 20th century's genocide Olympics. The mullahs might be bad, but compared to them they seem petty offenders. Nor are the mullahs more unpredictable and irrational. Consider that China acquired her nuclear-weapons capability at the onset of the Cultural Revolution. China in the late 1960's and early 70's better fit the image of a bizarre and unpredictable regime than Iran does today. One could have made a much better case for a preemptive strike against China's nuclear capabilities in the late 1960's and early 70's than one can for taking out Iran's emerging nuclear program. There were people who advocated preemptive action against China, but fortunately they were not heeded. Advocates of preemptive actions against Iran should be disregarded as well. The Iranian mullahs may be radical, but there is no evidence that they are suicidal. In all likelihood, they are deterrable.

That being said, there is one thing we must make clear to Tehran—and to North Korea as well. There dare not be any transfer of nuclear weapons or nuclear technology to terrorist organizations. That is a very bright red line that no regime can cross and hope to survive. The reason for such an uncompromising position on that point is that Al Qaeda and its ilk are not deterrable; they are not rational nation-state actors. The message to Tehran should be that we can accept Iran in the global nuclear club, albeit reluctantly, but any transfer of nuclear material or weapons to nonstate actors will be considered an act of war.

The combination of acceptance and deterrence is not a panacea. Iran would be very high on any American's list of the countries one would least like to see with nuclear weapons. A policy of acceptance and deterrence, however, is certainly better than a preemptive war that could have catastrophic consequences in the region—and beyond.

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Beautiful Terror

by James O. Tate

"Fame is a calamity."

—Turkish Proverb

The Complete Stories of Truman Capote
Introduction by Reynolds Price
New York: Random House;
300 pp., $24.95

Too Brief a Treat: The Letters of Truman Capote
Edited by Gerald Clarke
New York: Random House;
487 pp., $27.95

The face is familiar, but not the gray hair. To some few, it may be so from *Our Gang* shorts from the late 30's and early 40's, known by the moniker of Mickey Gubitosi. To others, it is the face of Bobby Blake of "Red Ryder" westerns and *Humoresque* (1947) and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948). To many, it is Robert Blake of *Baretta* on 70's television, in some episodes of which he disguised himself as a swishy character singing "Strangers in the Night"; but to most, it is familiar as that of the haunted killer Perry Smith, the lead in Richard Brooks' film *In Cold Blood* (1967), the role of a lifetime. If I am at all informed, Robert Blake's alibi for the alleged murder of his wife is that he could not have shot her because he had to go back into the restaurant to get his gun. Perhaps the author of *In Cold Blood*, with his celebrated powers of empathy, could have understood that one; which thought brings us to the matters at hand, for Truman Capote does come to mind these days, and for more reasons than those associated with Robert Blake. And the face of Capote, also, was a much-photographed face.

The dreary publishing scene is so lacking in spark that a longing glance in search of some wisp of inscribed stylishness must necessarily be a wistful and retrospective one. Yes, these books kind of take you back, but the tug of nostalgia contains within it a compensatory repulsion. To begin with, Reynolds Price's affected Introduction to the stories is nearly repellent enough to make me snap the book shut: "America has never been a land of readers, not of what's called literary fiction in any case." Earth to Professor Price: How are things in outer space, and how do you think Truman Capote made all that money? (Because look here, Mr. Professor, it would have been pretty hard for Truman Capote to make a living by writing, much less get rich, if there had been no readers of those estimable fictions of his.) But, dispensing with nonsense, we might yet want to make some sense of Truman Capote's literary remains, in their short manifestation at least, and to come to terms with the parabola of his career as well as the attraction that still has a certain spooky glow.

Writing fiction professionally is a treacherous undertaking. If the tests of merit and even success are surmounted, the problems only accumulate, and we know too well of numerous examples of self-destruction. The problems of sustaining a career without entrapment are manifold, and the lure of celebrity can be fool's gold. The glare of the spotlight heightens human flaws, and, if Truman Capote is today a name that evokes a warning, we also have to remember that his ascent was as remarkable as his fall.

As his biographer has noted, Truman Capote had a high opinion of his own gift—and not without justification, as his best stories show:

> No one valued his rich gifts more than he did himself: there was no other American of his generation, he felt, who had such a clear ear for the music and rhythm of the English language, no one else who wrote with such style and grace.

Indeed, one of his most prolific and aggressive competitors, Norman Mailer, even when advertising himself, endorsed Capote's self-esteem:

> Truman Capote I do not know well, but I like him. He is tart as a great aunt, but in his way he is a ballsy little guy, and he is the most perfect writer of my generation, he writes the best sentences word for word, rhythm upon rhythm. I would not have changed two

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words in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, which will become a small classic.

Obsessed with "the inner music words make," Capote knew that "Style is what you are," but he lived long enough to contradict himself in all his self-destruction. Unable to resist various fascinations, he felt that he had used up the world and seemed in the last part of his life to welcome death.

That story has been told brilliantly and in perspective by Gerald Clarke in his *Capote: A Biography* (1988), surely one of the most readable and fascinating biographies ever penned about a penman. That biography supplies everything that is needed to piece out the story of Capote's life insofar as it cannot be understood from the edition of letters that Clarke has now released. Born Truman Streckfus Persons in New Orleans in 1924 to an unstable woman who wanted to abort him and to a man who was a hustler, Capote would later take the name of his mother's second husband. The boy would grow up fearing abandonment, and no wonder, for his parents abandoned him again and again. His many later attachments to glamorous women were derived from his distrust of his promiscuous mother, who wound up an alcoholic suicide, as, in effect, in 1984, did he. This fear became a free-floating anxiety that never left him—it is the "mean reds" (as opposed to blues) of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Truman Capote, like Henry James, had "the imagination of disaster": At the age of 22, describing a love affair with a noted professor, he wrote,

> Did you ever, in that wonderland wilderness of adolesense [*sic*] ever, quite unexpectedly, see something, a dusk sky, a wild bird, a landscape, so exquisite terror struck you at the bone? And you are afraid, terribly afraid, the smallest movement, a leaf, say, turning in the wind, will shatter all? That is, I think, the way love is, or should be: one lives in beautiful terror.

Such was the sensibility and the expression of the author of *Other Voices, Other Rooms* and *A Tree of Night*, but there is not much of that tone of Gothic lyricism in Capote's letters.

Indeed, the first of Capote's letters is a brusque notification to his father that he had repudiated his name. Thus, to the 12-year-old, writing was a means of establishing identity, and, when he could no longer write, the end was near. The overall burden of these letters, however, is far from lugubrious—quite the opposite, in fact, their tone being mostly joyous, zestful, and eminently social. Capote's letters, being funny, are fun. For example, there are his terms of address and endearment: He calls a male adult "Peaches precious" or "lover lamb" or "Blessed Plum." His favorite valediction is "mille tenderesse" [*sic*]—no more than a warm-up for his butchering of the French language at the most elementary level. "Quel travesty!" he remarks of a photograph of himself; of Los Angeles, "Quel hole! . . . Better Death in Venice than life in Hollywood." Or again, "C'est marvelleuse" [*sic*] and "Merci buttercups cherie pour la letter . . ." But aiming "oodles of passion" all around, Capote can be nasty as well as charming. Annoyed by an article by Diana Trilling, in which she had complained about homosexuality in postwar literature, he opined, "If Diana wants really to know about this 'alarming' increase in dickey-lickers [*sic*], all she has to do is sit down and take a square look in the mirror." Years later, there would be other women who received the back of Capote's hand, for much less reason.

Truman Capote seems to have written letters chiefly to amuse his friends, to spread the news and the gossip. And he insists that one of the reasons he writes letters is to receive a letter in return. Of course, Capote writes often because he is "away"—he was a restless man and thought that a new location was good for writing. He spent most of the 1950's out of the country, a circumstance that alone provoked many letters. Here, I believe that all the travel reflections and the culture-vulture gossip eventually point up a lack, for Capote had hardly any historical sense at all. He seems to think, or rather to assume, that the traditional cultures of Italy, Sicily, and Greece are merely stage sets for him to enjoy. So he gives you a Sirmio without any of its poetic associations and a Taormina without any historical penumbra. Truman Capote was an autodidact who ignored school—his was a sensibility that relied on intuition and empathy and "emotional intelligence." When he lost his edge, he had little to fall back on.

These letters record the personal life of a man who, by sheer force of personality, carved out a spectacular ascent into the world of literary logrolling, publicity, and jet-set high life. Capote was a celebrity in the late 1940's, nationally recognized and always remembered for one particular image: the glossy, recumbent come-hither regard that graced, if it did not disgrace, the dust jacket of *Other Voices, Other Rooms* in 1948. Combined with the Southern Gothic obscurantism and homosexual narcissism of that novel's discourse, Capote's path seemed—but only seemed—to be set, and it was later confirmed by the stories in *A Tree of Night* (1949). *The Grass Harp* (1951), a Gothic-lite novel, showed Capote in another, essentially comic mode, while the film script for John Huston's *Beat the Devil* (1953) is still, like the film itself, valued today.

Truman Capote's diversions into reportage opened up new possibilities, and he needed them. *The Muses Are Heard* (1956), his account of the foray into Russia of an operatic troupe, was and is a toot. The sharp observations and humor show something of Capote's particular gifts. When the high-spirited Capote elicited titters on the streets of Leningrad, he replied, "Laugh, you dreary people. But what will you do for laughs next week, when I am gone from here?" After another of his exhibitions, a Soviet bureaucrat intoned, "Ve have them like that in the Soviet Union, but ve hide them." Yes, and in America, ve put them on TV.

Breakfast at Tiffany's (1958), a work of charm that is basically an exploded short story, featured the Holly Golightly subsequently trashed by Hollywood. The heroine, though she has numerous female models, was also based on the author himself, who, like Holly, had come from the provinces to New York, and who lived a free and whimsical life in the big city. After *Tiffany's*, Capote went to a place no one predicted.

These letters also record much of the gossip of the international homosexual community, with its French and English extensions, that Capote explored and exploited. Capote knew Gide and Cocteau as well as Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo, and he had connections that joined, at least for him, the New York publishing crowd with the hip writers, and the worlds of Hollywood, Broadway, the arts, and high society. As the years went by, the culture, if it can be so designated, of the fabulously wealthy became more and more important to him, and he was already planning his pseudo-Proustian attack on the hostesses he had culti-

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vated in 1958, before his obsessive detour into a remarkable project of literary slumming of a quality that Poe, Dickens, and Dostoyevsky had known.

The little newspaper item that brought the massacre of the Clutter family to Capote's attention took him into the remote heart of the country. Strangely enough, the exuberantly sophisticated author had an affinity not only for the familiar and the homely but for their connection to the grotesque and the brutal. The letters tell us something about his exhaustive investigation and the years of "needlework" or painstaking composition that followed. *In Cold Blood* (1965) was Capote's big hit and his bid for serious recognition, which he deservedly received in spades. But the exhausting engagement with the material and, particularly, with that pathetic wreck of a man, that pitiable murderer and other self, Perry Smith, cost Capote dearly, and he never recovered from the ordeal. When he witnessed the hangings, something in him died, too. Possibly the famous masked ball that Capote staged in the Plaza in 1966 was an attempt to recover from the damage, but that damage was irreparably done.

I find nothing more impressive in these letters than the advice that Truman Capote gave to Alvin Dewey III (the son of the agent of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation who is a major figure in *In Cold Blood*), who had asked for some help with his writing. Capote responds with sage advice, balanced, clear, tasteful, discreet, and kind. This is the Capote who was known to some as a man of high intelligence and keen sensitivity—a man who was a true friend and a writer of taste and discrimination. But we would have to say that this Capote is not always on display.

After the 60's, the letters tail off and die as their writer did. Capote had become confused. He never understood why his rich intimates regarded his portrayals of them in *Answered Prayers* and elsewhere as betrayals, but make no mistake about it: They were betrayals. Now, maybe those ladies and some gentlemen had been foolish to allow a writer into their confidence, but nevertheless, a personal confession is not meant to be broadcast, the inherent ruthlessness of writers notwithstanding. And these tangles were not the only confusions that distorted and then destroyed Capote's career and life.

Losing the discipline that had always sustained him, he began to surrender to temptations he had always known: the spiral of depression, alcohol, and exhibitionism, to which he now added drugs. Capote had to be led from the stage on occasion and accepted the role of buffoon on national television broadcasts, clowning for Johnny Carson and indulging in bitchy snarkiness (or was it acute observation?), saying memorably of Meryl Streep, for example, "She has *eyes* like a *hen*." But Capote had by then become one of the dreary people himself, not gay but terminally morose, wooden on film, drunk on stage; and so there were, toward the end, no letters from the man of letters. Decline and fall is one of the most daunting stories in the history of American literature—so much so that, when Norman Mailer called the death of Capote "a good career move," strictly speaking, he was right. The blurring of the distinctions between life and art were not so much a symptom as a cause of Capote's destruction.

But to turn to *The Complete Stories* is to go back to the establishment of his career. First published in magazines such as *Mademoiselle* and *Harper's Bazaar*, most of the early work today seems mannered and obscure. Visions of narcissistic entrapment, doubling, doom, and psychic disintegration are more frustrating than revelatory, but "Among the Paths to Eden" (1960) is an example of the precise diction, tonal mastery, poised charm, and satisfying surprise that constitute the Capote hallmark.

Perhaps "A Christmas Memory" (1956) is the great exception among the stories, because it is so obviously appealing. Tellingly enough, the memory is one of childhood, a subject which, for Capote, banishes all that is strained, for with it he is most comfortable. The recollection of humble Christmas rituals is a love story of a kind and, above all, a presentation of what is gone, and gone forever. The wound will never heal. Touching on regions of the cozy, the cute, and the smarmy but never encroaching on them (Christmas at Dingley Dell is on the horizon), this affecting and effective work strikes at the heart because it comes from there. It shows Capote at his most appealing in writing a tale that is universally accessible, in part because it is no story at all. It is, simply, a memory—rendered by the man who, 50 years later, would answer the phone during the holidays by saying, "Jingle, jingle." No amount of Stolichnaya could erase the bitterness.

Speaking of bitterness, a later example is "Mojave" (1975), which is part of Capote's unfinished Proustian project. The story has a cunning design of reflecting stories within the story, the burden of the juxtaposition being the impossibility of love. (The one who is loved never returns the emotion that is invested.) This story is admirably crafted and inflected, though its underlying misogyny is unjustified and may simply be a cover for homosexual frustration and resentment. To compare a woman to a snake because "The last thing that dies is their tail" is a bit less than profound and may merely indicate that Capote's pose as the confidant of women was also a platform for homosexual revenge. The story shows that, even at so late a date, Capote could still compose with the best of them; but it also shows that his artistic judgment had become flawed by emotional pollution—the agenda was writing the story, rather than the story *being* the agenda.

The story here is not the stories he wrote or the letters he left but that of a man who attained a share of glory and then lost it all, or perhaps threw it away. Truman Capote was a funny man and a charming one, who was overwhelmed, finally, by his own dark side, "the mean reds." If his letters are not great ones, nor his stories quite the cream of his work, they are nevertheless more than welcome, rewarding the attention paid them. For people who value the possibilities of writing, Capote the craftsman will always have a place on the shelf; for some others, no Gothic exploration that he inscribed will ever be as scary as the one that he lived. c

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Themselves Alone

by Derek Turner

The Great South African Land Scandal
by Philip du Toit
Centurion, South Africa: Legacy Publications; 271 pp., $26.00

◆

"Our sympathy," said Gibbon with his usual acuity, "is cold to the relation of distant misery." You do not need to know very much about human nature to agree with the great historiographer that it is often very difficult, or even impossible, to sympathize with the woes of strangers.

And if it is difficult to feel other people's pain, how much more difficult is it when the unfortunates in question have for long been demonized and disregarded by the world's *bien-pensants*? There will be a surprisingly large number of otherwise kindly, well-meaning people who will be stolidly indifferent to this book, because they have come, over their lives, to believe that Afrikaners are, to a man, ultraconservative, *verkrampte*, racist, slave-driving, *sjambok*-wielding bigots. A book that details the violent attacks on, and relentless dispossession of, Afrikaner farmers by black criminals will accordingly fail to incite the same levels of passion that it would were the relentless dispossessions the other way around. For all too many people, reared as they have been on a media diet of cartoonish Afrikaner stereotypes and schmaltzy Mandela worship, it will seem as if what is now happening in South Africa is merely a kind of redress for historical wrongs. Yet the stories contained in this volume are as harrowing as any that can be found in the woeful story of postcolonial Africa.

The conservative British press has featured many stories about white Zimbabweans victimized, and often murdered, by Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF thugs. Such tales will not affect British-government policy; events like these were always likely to be considered unimportant by a government that includes Peter Hain, a former Mugabe groupie, in its ministerial ranks. Yet there has been genuine concern expressed on behalf of these luckless whites who, for some reason best known to themselves, were happy-go-lucky enough to entrust their country's future to black-majority rule under an avowedly Marxist president. There have been no comparable campaigns in the British press on behalf of South Africa's farmers, although more white farmers have been killed in South Africa than in Zimbabwe. Since the ANC came to power in 1994, over 1,600 white farmers have been murdered, and many others wounded or even tortured, and there have been over 8,000 attacks on farmers and their families. Mandela's "rainbow nation" is developing a shade of blood-red to replace the white.

Philip du Toit is an attorney who practices in Pretoria. His farming background and professional training in agricultural and labor law have given him special interest in, and insight into, the deteriorating situation for South Africa's farmers in postapartheid South Africa. This is not just a devastating and highly detailed critique of the ANC's childlike belief in ideology over experience but an elegy for a fast-disappearing way of life of a people, the literal *Boere*: a shrinking white tribe surrounded by the cruel, uncomprehending mass of Africa. As with all such *cris-du-coeur*, the book is untidily written, and production values are pedestrian. It lacks an index and bibliography, although there are sources given for many of the figures and direct quotations. More detailed maps would also have been helpful. Yet there are literary compensations, such as the extracts from a British settler's 1820 diary and part of a short story from 1906. The blemishes merely emphasize the passion with which every word is invested.

Part of the ANC's policy platform included "land redistribution," whereby farmland was to be taken away from commercial farmers (almost entirely white) and given to poor blacks, especially if those blacks could prove they had a previous claim on the land on account of their ancestors having lived there. An estimated 20 percent of all South Africa's farmland is now under claim. Farmers (many of whom had opposed power-sharing in any case) clearly did not welcome this policy but seemed generally prepared to make the best of it, merely hoping that they could obtain a fair price from the government for whatever portion of their properties was claimed by tribes or otherwise sought by the government. But—*quelle surprise!*—it did not quite work this way.

Almost immediately after the ANC takeover, the police service began to be Africanized, with white officers leaving or being made redundant, to be replaced with often inexperienced black personnel. Predictably, crime, which had been at remarkably low levels by African standards, went through the roof. The effect of this was felt especially in rural areas, far from police stations, where whites are few and far between but blacks are numerous. And the latter were often restive and resentful of their white neighbors' belongings, which, they had been told, were merely the fruits of racism. That at least some of the whites' prosperity was attributable to their hard work and technical knowledge does not seem to have occurred to many of these gangs—nor, for that matter, to local ANC politicians. White farmers began to experience a rising tide of theft, criminal damage, and squatting, shortly followed by violent attacks and even murder.

The newly politicized police force has often ignored farmers' complaints and failed to take any action to protect farmers or their livelihoods. Local ANC dignitaries who were appealed to by increasingly desperate farmers seem often to have taken the view that such things do not really matter, because "they stole it from us in the first place." On top of this, many ANC bosses are corrupt and connive at the excesses of local tribal leaders and gangsters. Farmers who had established profitable farms, and whose family roots in particular areas often went back a century or more, found themselves facing massive debts as their crops and machines were damaged or stolen, having to install massively expensive security equipment, and, finally, selling their land at enormously discounted prices to often spurious land-claimants or squatters. Said land-claimants-and-squatters-turned-yeomen often did not have the first idea how to run a modern farm, with the result that thousands of acres of productive farmland swiftly turned into dustbowl or reverted to bush. White farmers who offered to share their expertise with the new farmers were often rebuffed, presumably out of a sense of mistaken racial pride. One example of many possible ones will suffice.

In the Letsitele Valley in Limpopo Province, a group of farms had been founded in 1956, after the government took action to help the land recover from the black inhabitants' "slash and burn" methods. The inhabitants were compulsorily moved to better properties nearby; most went willingly. Farmed by the white Amm family for 43 years, the farms

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had complex irrigation systems and state-of-the-art equipment and generated a turnover in excess of 15 million rand *per annum*, through production of mangoes, bananas, macadamia nuts, tomatoes, and other vegetables. As a sideline, Mrs. Amm had created a world-famous arboretum of indigenous trees.

Upon the ANC's accession to power, those who had been removed from the land, and their descendants, made a land claim against the white farmers, supported by the government. A claimants' committee was formed, and the government gave 4.5 million rand as operating capital. One Chiko Letsoalo, chairman of the committee, replied to the offer of technical assistance made by some of the outgoing white owners as follows:

> We are surprised about stories that we or the government would enter into partnership with the current owners so as not to lose the benefit of their expertise. We have already sent people to agricultural colleges to learn about farming. We will run these farms through our own expertise.

Mr. Letsoalo then moved into the farmhouse (while keeping his day job working for a publisher), and the self-styled "management team" awarded themselves high salaries. These important steps having been taken, they proceeded to run the farm into the ground. Machines fell into disrepair. Then, there was no money available for spraying, and, by February 2003, the farm workers had to march to the farm office to demand their salaries. Researchers for this book visited the farm in 2003 to find broken machinery lying around, the irrigation system broken down, crops unharvested and unwatered, and the river filled with rubbish. The electricity had been cut off, the famous arboretum had all but disappeared, and the farmhouse sat neglected in a weed-infested garden. In January 2003, the farms were placed "under judicial management." As Toit says passionately,

> This thought is echoed throughout South Africa. Why in Heaven's name hand over a productive farm to those who don't really want to farm it and, in many instances, to people who firmly believe the operation will continue producing a healthy income without any hard work, risk or capital input?

Far worse than these stories are those of actual attacks on farmers, their families, and their employees—like that of Gunther Gathmann, a farmer in KwaZulu/Natal, who lost his brother, aunt, uncle, and cousin to attacks by murderous thugs. In his area, 11 farmers have been killed in recent years. None of these murders featured robberies, which suggests that the crimes were politically or racially motivated. Some farmers have simply abandoned their farms, while others have committed suicide under the stress. Nationally, since the ANC came to power, a farm murder has occurred, on average, every two days. The murder rate among South Africa's commercial farmers is the highest for any specific group in the world—313 per 100,000. Genocide Watch has gone so far as to term the campaign genocidal. With all due caution toward a group affiliated with Amnesty International, it is difficult to dispute this analysis. To make this an even more powerful book—one that might even yet shame the world into action—the author should have devoted more space to murder than to mismanagement.

To date, only the South African government has responded to the book by—naturally—denouncing Dr. Toit as a "racist." Yet, if there is anyone of sense within the ANC administration, he would be well advised to read and assimilate this book—for who will feed South Africa if her remaining commercial farmers are thrown to the dogs? Will it be, as with Zimbabwe, yet another case for the aid agencies? Will the proud farmers, who defied the British Empire and created prolific farmland where there had been desert and jungle, give way to Red Cross food parcels and convoys from *Médécins Sans Frontières*? If South Africa's farmers do not find some way of restraining the dogmatic excesses of the ANC and reining in the violent criminals, that is what will happen—to everyone's detriment. Unlike the white liberals who subverted apartheid, only to move overseas when black rule became too much for them, Afrikaner farmers do not generally enjoy dual nationality, or close family overseas, or supporters in the media. If there is to be a solution, it will have to come from themselves alone. Those of us who retain a little fellow-feeling for our civilizatory cousin should at least keep abreast of what is happening in South Africa.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, *published in London.*

Political Romanticism, Utopian Violence

by H.A. Scott Trask

The Bullet's Song: Romantic Violence and Utopia
by William Pfaff
New York: Simon & Schuster; 368 pp., $27.95

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"This book tells a story about the twentieth century, which has in it a lesson for the twenty-first—one that I would think unlikely to be learned, since it is a moral lesson, concerning the role of virtue in human existence, and we know about moral lessons." Thus begins William Pfaff's incisive and bracing study of the appeal, and destructive history, of utopian violence in the 20th (and now 21st) century.

The Bullet's Song is organized around six key figures (including artists, soldiers, intellectuals, and propagandists) of the last century, each of whom embraced violence as a legitimate means either to personal transcendence or to redemptive revolution. They are T.E. Lawrence (the British officer who led the Arab revolt against the Ottomans), Ernst Junger (the German storm trooper and postwar scientist and author), Gabriele D'Annunzio (the Italian poet and playwright who took over the city of Fiume in 1919), Willi Munzenberg (the brilliant German propagandist who headed the Comintern during the 1920's and 30's), André Malraux (the French novelist and communist fellow traveler and later Gaullist), and Arthur Koestler (the expatriate Hungarian novelist who turned from Stalinism to militant anticommunism). Other men considered are the Italian artist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, whose futurism prefigured fascism, and Benito Mussolini, who fused nationalism and socialism into a powerful combination.

Pfaff believes World War I was the inaugurating event of the 20th century and the last, destructive, act of the 19th. It overturned governments, dissolved empires, engendered revolutions, disrupted societies, and blew apart the moral and legal frameworks that had governed Europe for centuries. Lawrence and Junger, by far the most admirable and ethical of the

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historical figures studied here, illustrate two important lessons to be learned from this upheaval. First, men will always be drawn to war, which offers adventure and escape, the solidarity of comradeship and collective endeavor, heightened experience, and the freedom to destroy. Second, the survival of civilization depends on the secure and lasting recovery of the 19th-century code of European chivalry, which imposed limits upon war, governing both personal and collective conduct. Given the allure of war, and mankind's constant temptation to violence, Pfaff views the loss of this code as nothing less than catastrophic.

Lawrence and Junger remained loyal to the earlier tradition; neither approved of what rose in its place. Lawrence opposed his government's policy to extend imperial control over the Arabs, and Junger, while initially supportive of National Socialism, turned against Hitler when he saw what he was doing to Germany, the Jews, and Europe. The rest of Pfaff's subjects, however, reveled in the postwar disillusion and disorder and embraced various forms of violent political romanticism, based on "the most influential myth of modern Western political society": that of "the total and redemptive transformation of human society through political means," which now included totalitarian dictatorship and total war. Pfaff believes faith in utopian war was the most "disruptive force in international politics from 1918 to 1989," adding ominously that that faith "has reappeared today in official and unofficial circles." He is referring, of course, to the neoconservative Bush administration.

Pfaff believes that the sole great state to have survived the cataclysms of the century is now a global military hegemon driven by the same kind of utopian expectations and the same faith in redemptive violence that characterized earlier historical disruptions. He is openly contemptuous of Francis Fukuyama's thesis that history is reaching its end with the universalization of American democratic capitalism. Pfaff regards Trotsky and Che Guevara as the founding fathers of neoconservatism. Guevara naively believed that the Cuban revolution could be replicated in other Latin countries. When he tried to instigate revolution in Bolivia, he was shot. He failed to realize that successful revolutions are the products of "indigenous forces" and cannot be orchestrated or imposed from outside. "The American project to deliver democracy to the 'greater Middle East' through politico-military intervention" is "founded on the identical fallacy."

"Modern governments," Pfaff argues, "led by the United States, increasingly act within the dimensions of a virtual reality their own propaganda has created," (following the pattern established by Munzenberg's Comintern), with the result that ideological constructs and meaningless abstractions "acquire a power over political imagination and discourse, and official decisions," that is almost absolute. President Bush has repeatedly insisted that the United States battles evil itself in the global "War on Terror." He has relentlessly dehumanized Palestinian resistance fighters, Iraqi insurgents, and Saudi hard-liners as nameless "terrorists" who have no other motivation than hatred of freedom, opposition to democracy, and jealousy of the United States. In such eschatological warfare, "You are either with us, or you are with the terrorists," in the words of the President. For Pfaff, such apocalyptic rhetoric evidences the descent of "American political thought toward the darkness of totalitarian conceptions and discourse, translating human conflict into metaphysical combat." "[R]eal American conservatives," he observes, are opposed to this kind of ideological warfare and among those "most anxious about the country's future."

Pfaff prefers an "anti-utopian tradition of thought" that accepts the "permanent realities of politics and history" and teaches us to "look for solutions . . . within experienced reality rather than [in] imagination about the future." This tradition, he believes, can be traced to the Old Testament, as well as to Aristotle, and it finds modern champions in Milton, Tocqueville, Burke, Burckhardt, Acton, Niebuhr, Aron, Arendt, and Kennan, all of whom believed that art is more important to human civilization than politics and that the true test of a nation is not her military or economic power but her cultural achievements, her quality of life, and the ethical behavior of her people. These thinkers hold to a tragic, rather than an heroic or eschatological, view of history and to a realistic view of man's predicament in a world in which evil is ineradicable; suffering and injustice, inescapable; and continuity, rather than progress, the story of man's moral state.

Pfaff's concluding lesson, that violence should be rejected as a means of social and political change, is so amply supported by argument and example as to seem unanswerable. Those who have sought to remove evil, suffering, and injustice from the world by means of war and revolution have only added to the sum of its villainy. As American artillery, tanks, and aircraft bombard the cities of Iraq, we do well to remember that "to sacrifice living human beings to make 'a better world' is an act of totalitarian morality and is also futile. There is no collective solution to the human condition." Our most important duty, as Aristotle taught and Pfaff believes, is rather to cultivate virtue and all forms of excellence within ourselves.

H.A. Scott Trask is an independent historian in the process of writing "Copperheads and Conservatives: The Northern Opposition to the Civil War."

Playing Poetry With a Net

by Mark Royden Winchell

The Muscled Truce
by Catharine Savage Brosman
Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press; 64 pp., $22.95

◆

In the Introduction to his classic anthology of Fugitive verse, William Pratt writes: "Modern American poetry abounds in individualism, but two groups of poets have affected its course profoundly." He is referring, of course, to the Imagists and the Fugitives. Nearly a century after the Imagists first gathered in London in 1909, I wonder what current movements in poetry will seem to have been decisive to a critic writing 100 years from now. I suspect that the rediscovery of formal verse by American poets at the end of the 20th century will rank high on the list. As poet-critic David Middleton has pointed out, "for well over three thousand years—from before Homer until the end of the nineteenth century—almost all poets in the western tradition composed in measured verse." In the long view, the free-verse revolution of the 20th century may prove more an aberration than a permanent development. If this is true, then Catharine Savage Brosman's poetry is likely to stand

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the test of time.

It may be that poetry is neither an expression of emotion, as Wordsworth thought, nor an escape from emotion, as Eliot would have it, but a channeling of emotion. To accomplish that task, all the resources of language must be available. For this reason, the term "expansive" poetry is surely more accurate than the constricted designation "Neoformalist." In her most recent volume of verse, *The Muscled Truce*, Brosman wears a variety of masks and speaks in a range of voices unavailable to those who equate poetry with personal therapy.

The first section of 13 poems ("A Distant Shore") is a series of monologues spoken by a spectrum of mythological, historical, and imaginary characters—including King Minos, Lord Byron, the Nazi-turned-Ally Ernst Hanfstaengl, and a prisoner of war from Vietnam. Although these poems are written in formal verse, Brosman uses such devices as enjambment and caesura to make her lines sound conversational without being in the least bit prosaic. Like Robert Frost, Brosman knows that the human voice has a rhythm independent of meaning. (On occasion, as in "King Minos Speaks," the effect is similar to that of a modern "imitation" of classical verse.) Moreover, Brosman's narrative power is such that she can repeatedly create dramatic tension in a poem running fewer than two pages.

Far from seeing art as invariably redemptive, Brosman realizes that artistic creation is a devil's pact bred from suffering. (As an epigraph for her entire volume, she has selected Camus' observation that "there is no love of life without despair of life.") In one particularly haunting poem, "Up Island," she writes of a man who subjects his family to prolonged abuse when his wife refuses to give him a divorce to marry a more recent love. The tale is told by the man's adult daughter—a painter. She concludes by writing:

> . . . Neuroses are a gift; they've let
> me paint. I'm going to do the river next,
> unleashed along its stony bed, the way
> my mother wept. One day I'll paint the moors,
> the bracken thick and wet, the heather dark,
> a lonely woman moaning to the wind.

In the second section of the book, "A Muscled Truce," Brosman abandons personae to write from an observational perspective about a gallery of individuals who use a particular vocation or hobby to define their approach to life. (I am reminded of John Crowe Ransom's discussion of "work forms" and "play forms" in his seminal essay "Forms and Citizens.") Also gone is the conversational voice, replaced by an elegant but functional iambic tetrameter. Although the beat and the rhyme call attention to themselves, the form is made flexible by the syntax of each poem. You can hear the naturalness of the *spoken sentence*.

Although none of the speakers is identified as a poet, "The Swimmer" gives us a trope for poetry in the phrase that also serves as the volume's title: "He finishes his laps; / his limbs are free and loose— / to move the world, perhaps, / by such a muscled truce." Like the swimmer, the poet moves through a fluid element—one that embodies the Hereclitian paradox of fixity and flux. Although intuitive logic would dictate that one go under, it is possible not only to stay afloat but to glide forward through the proper balance of energy and grace. To do so is finally a life-sustaining act, as the alternative is to sink beneath the watery floor.

In the third and final section of the book, we hear what sounds like the voice of the poet herself. Whether or not these poems are literally autobiographical, the speaker is not obviously someone other than Brosman. In a sense, the use of personae in the first section and third-person observation in the second earns Brosman the privilege of personal reflection in what she calls "A Cosmic Comedy." As befits the allusion to Dante, religion plays a key role in this part of the volume. In "Painting, Anonymous, circa 1700," Brosman follows the example of Auden and makes a classic painting the text for her poem. After describing a flawlessly executed rendering of the Crucifixion, she writes:

> . . . The painter's eye
> has failed him, though, perhaps
> from guilt or awe:
> the sacred face is blurred, the cloth
> awry—
>
> as if, a spectator himself, he stood
> in tears and helpless in the crowd
> that poured
> their imprecations on the holy
> rood
> and on the broken body of the
> Lord.

In effect, the artist becomes a hypothetical spectator, whose very impotence makes him a surrogate for us all.

An even more striking vision can be found in the longest poem in the volume, "In the Virgin Islands." In the third of four sections, the speaker comes across the gardener who works for the woman she is visiting. At first, she takes this unkempt figure for John the Baptist. But then she remembers the morning of the Resurrection, when Mary Magdalene,

> distraught, supposed she saw the
> gardener,
> a simple man of no pretensions,
> standing there alone;
> and then she recognized her
> friend, and ran
> to tell the others, who assumed that
> she was mad
> with grief—announcing Eden reconciled
> and green, the perishable body radiant, the earth reborn.

What is initially taken for mistaken identity reveals a more profound resemblance that is at the very heart of the Gospel.

Whatever good the modernist aberration may have accomplished, it drove away the popular audience for poetry. Far too often, serious artistic purpose became synonymous with obscurity of meaning and an assault on conventional meter. While this may have been a necessary reaction against the bombast and sentimentality of high Victorian verse, the early modernists eventually turned poetry into a coterie art, not unlike opera and ballet. Fortunately, the expansionist poets of our own era are proving once again that verse need not patronize us to be understood nor titillate us to be enjoyed. Robert Frost once compared writing free verse to playing tennis without a net. Not only does Catharine Savage Brosman play *with* a net: Her serves and volleys are a wonder to behold.

Mark Royden Winchell's next book, Reinventing the South: Essays on the Literary Imagination, *will by published by the University of Missouri Press later this year.*

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Room to Pass

by Patrick J. Walsh

Longfellow—A Rediscovered Life
by Charles H. Calhoun
New York: Beacon Press;
317 pp., $27.50

◆

Few people read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) much anymore. Lines from his poems were once on the tips of tongues the world over. Students used to memorize "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere," and lines from "Evangeline" and "Hiawatha." Longfellow's once-great literary reputation rivaled that of Tennyson and Dickens, and, after his death, the American poet was singularly honored by having his bust placed in Westminster Abbey with the greatest English poets. When Longfellow is mentioned at all today, however, he is held up to ridicule by modern academics and dismissed. His gentle Christian nature would have accepted his waning reputation tranquilly. Perhaps he would even quote from one of his poems: "The tide rises and the tide falls / The twilight darkens, the curlew calls."

Charles Calhoun's new biography, which is both overdue and welcome, would rescue Longfellow from the surrounding darkness. The book's cover sports a handsome portrait of the poet at 33 years of age. Longfellow is generally pictured as an old man with flowing white beard. But he, too, had his youth and, when young, was a bit of a dandy. A clever student at Harvard's Hasty Pudding Club wrote of the Smith Professor of French and Spanish:

> Just twig the Professor dressed out
> in his best
> Yellow kids and buff gaiters, green
> breeches, blue vest;
> With hat on one whisker and an air
> that says go it
> Look here the great North Ameri-
> can poet.

A staff member on the Maine Humanities Council, Calhoun is a skilled biographer who has written a book that is a pleasure to read. His comments on Longfellow's poetry are sensible and persuasive, righting a great wrong in American literary history.

Born in Maine on February 27, 1807 (when that state was still part of Massachusetts), Longfellow led an interesting life. His father, a prominent lawyer, sent young Henry to Bowdoin College, where he graduated along with Nathaniel Hawthorne. Longfellow then left America for three years to study language in Europe. An accomplished linguist, he once had to produce an American passport to prove that he was not a native Italian. Always, he retained a sunny Mediterranean disposition. Upon his return to the United States, he taught modern languages at Bowdoin. Six years later, he again set out for Europe, returned a widower after his first wife perished from a miscarriage in Rotterdam, and took up a professorship at Harvard. But Longfellow was eager to retire from teaching to devote himself to poetry. He married Fanny Appleton and purchased a house in Cambridge that had once served as George Washington's headquarters. Here, the founding father of American poetry produced his great works.

Longfellow's sonnets are among the finest in the English language. Those dedicated to Dante come from his beautiful translation of the *Divine Comedy* and are tinged with the sadness Longfellow felt over the frightful fate of his beloved Fanny, who burned to death in 1861. (Calhoun has uncovered new information suggesting that Fanny's skirts caught fire after being set alight by one of the children, who was playing with matches.) Longfellow, in attempting to put out the fire, was so badly burned that he grew a beard to cover the facial scars.

Calhoun seems a bit tentative defending Longfellow. He need not be. Philip Larkin took the academic critics and their domiciled poets head on, charging that "They produce a new kind of bad poetry, not the old kind that tries to move the reader, but one that does not even try." It came about because of a "cunning merger between the modern poet, literary critic and academic." This modern monopoly manufactures products Longfellow would not recognize as poetry: unrhymed lines centered on a page with no sonorous sounds or resounding insights leading to the eternal.

Unlike his contemporary Ralph Waldo Emerson, Longfellow remained a faithful Christian who was strongly drawn to the Roman Catholic Church. I suspect that this is another reason he has not found favor with modern critics, who have no faith and are antithetical to things spiritual and supernatural: They inhabit a closed gnostic realm inside their own skulls. Such dry bones can harm no one. The great masters like Longfellow wrote of things eternal, and for poets yet to be born.

Longfellow believed in a communion of poets, as well as a Communion of Saints, who beckon us beyond the worldly gloom of sin and death. From an early age, he was fascinated by Dante. Longfellow's influence led to Dante Studies being established at Harvard, and it was there that T.S. Eliot that became strongly influenced by the Florentine poet. And it was Dante who led Eliot out of the spiritual wasteland of modernity.

Patrick J. Walsh writes from Quincy, Massachusetts.

LIBERAL ARTS

SIMPLE SENTENCES

"The Post: Why do you think [Osama] bin Laden has not been caught?

"THE PRESIDENT: Because he's hiding.

"The Post: Our allies have done all they can do to help catch him?

"THE PRESIDENT: We're on the hunt.

"The Post: Do you think others are on the hunt, too? Are you happy, content with what other countries are doing in that hunt?

"THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

"The Post: Anyone you're not happy with? (Laughter.)"

—*from a* Washington Post *interview with President George W. Bush (January 16, 2005)*

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by Samuel Francis

Perfect for This Moment

The hero of the hour, if not the messiah of the New Age, is Barack Obama, a gentleman whose name might lead you to suspect him of being an Afghan terrorist or the most recent American puppet candidate for the presidency of Iraq but who, in fact, is merely the freshman senator from the state of Illinois and very possibly the next vice president (and future president) of the United States. But his current and future achievements are of little significance. What's really important is Mr. Obama's rapid ascent to superhuman and indeed virtually messianic status. Why is this happening?

In the first place, it really is happening. Mr. Obama, an entirely obscure state legislator from Illinois, was unknown outside his own district until last summer, when he managed to wangle a spot at the Democratic National Convention and deliver what everyone seems to agree was an impassioned, brilliant, electrifying keynote address that Really Told It Like It Is. I confess I have long since abandoned my adolescent habit of listening to the speeches at the national party conventions, and I didn't listen to this one (or any other), but I'm skeptical. I suspect it was simply yet another contrived stemwinder that wallowed in the insights and gestures that the audience at Democratic conventions and in the media elite insist on hearing. Yet within a day, national commentators not only were woozy with awe at their newfound genius but were whispering, not very quietly, about a Hillary-Obama ticket in 2008 (a proposition that more or less conceded that John Kerry, the purported hero of the hour, would return to obscurity very quickly, much more quickly than the same people booming Mr. Obama were publicly admitting.)

The salivation over Mr. Obama soon became a veritable tsunami when, winning 70 percent of the vote, he devastated black neoconservative Alan Keyes in the Illinois Senate race, an outcome predictable to everyone except the Republicans who imported Mr. Keyes from Maryland and nominated him. Mr. Keyes, the roommate of neocon wonderboy Bill Kristol at Harvard and later Mr. Kristol's campaign manager in yet another lackluster neocon political effort, has become a kind of professional losing candidate, having run for Senate (and paying himself a handsome salary for doing so out of his own campaign funds) and for president several times. Mr. Keyes' main function seems to be to make sure real conservatives can't win, and, if that is his purpose, he is impressively good at it. Last year, however, he was upstaged in this profession by the Illinois GOP itself, which chose him to confront Mr. Obama rather than nominate the reasonably conservative James Oberweis, who had opposed the Bush amnesty for illegal aliens. Thanks to the bottomless and truly astonishing inanity of the Republican Party, then, we now enjoy not only another liberal Democrat in the Senate but the messiah himself—and, soon, the utopia he and his disciples can be expected to deliver.

Probably the real reason, if there was any, that the Stupid Party brought Mr. Keyes into the race was because he is black and so is Mr. Obama. (Illinois Republican State Senator Steve Rauschenberger said as much to a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times*.) By running a black Republican against the black Democrat, the Stupidoes figured, "they can't accuse us of racism," and we can cut into Mr. Obama's black base. What is frightening is that there are people who actually think this way. You can accuse the Republicans of racism regardless of what they do because that is the whole point of accusing people of racism—to smear them with an unanswerable but meaningless charge and thus to provoke them into spending all their time and energy trying to "disprove" it. But you can also accuse them of something actually resembling "racism" because they obviously assumed that blacks would support a black candidate over a white one, because that's the way blacks are, you know.

In the event, Mr. Obama won a tidy 92 percent of the black vote in Illinois against the black Stupid Party candidate; Mr. Keyes managed to salvage a modest majority of Republicans (56 percent) and to lose overwhelmingly even the state Catholic vote. (He is a Catholic himself and is most noted for his fervent opposition to abortion.) Mr. Obama, a member of the United Church of Christ and a strong supporter of abortion, won the Catholics in the state by a not-so-modest 75 percent.

Because he won so heavily, Mr. Obama's victory actually had little to do with race, but it is when we touch that sensitive subject that we approach what I suspect are the real reasons for his elevation to messianic status. Mr. Obama, you see, is not only black but is what used to be called a "mulatto"—half black and half white. His father was a native of Kenya and an economist who met his white mother, aged 18, at the University of Hawaii. (He seems to have deserted his wife and child soon after the latter's birth; according to *Newsweek*, he saw his son only once after leaving, ten years later.) Mr. Obama, as the hot gospellers who are crafting his messianic iconography never tire of repeating, is "the first African-American male Democrat elected to the U.S. Senate." He was also, they like to repeat, "the first African-American president of the Harvard law review," and, as *Newsweek* solemnly assured us in a nauseatingly gushing cover story on Mr. Obama in December, this "was not the product of affirmative action or popularity but of academic candlepower and unrelenting work." Why, one wonders, should anyone be disposed to question that, and why would *Newsweek* feel the need to make sure we know it?

As not only a "multiracial person," as I suppose we must say today, but also a Harvard illuminatus, Mr. Obama is staged to join, as well as to lead, the swelling ranks of the New America, an America that itself is intended to be multiracial. His colleagues in the New America so far are such figures as Tiger Woods and Halle Berry, but soon there will be others. The myth being crafted around

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these multiracial persons, and about multiracialism in general, is that it means the "end of racism," that whites cannot possibly continue being mean to nonwhites because there will not be any whites left, and the nonwhites will be such only in part, so they will not be able to hate white people, either. In the meantime, multiracial political messiahs such as Mr. Obama can lead us closer to the promised land of a rainbow America that mass immigration into the "first universal nation" is supposed to be creating.

A TV interview with Mr. Obama soon after his speech at the convention made his multiracial identity and mission clear, but it made something else clear as well. Mr. Obama regards himself, as he stated in the interview, as black, and so, obviously, do the 92 percent of black voters who supported him. Like other multiracial persons, he therefore finds himself in a strong position. He can be both black and nonblack at the same time and can thereby perform two different functions. When he is black, he can appeal to the black racial solidarity that allows black voters, for example, to deliver 90 percent of their support to particular candidates, and thereby reap the political rewards of possessing a clear nonwhite racial identity. But when he is multiracial, he can lecture whites about how race is meaningless. Indeed, he can even lecture blacks about this, as he did in speaking to the Congressional Black Caucus soon after his election, when he told them, as *Newsweek* reports, that "I'm looking forward to working with you and *all* Americans." That's swell, but the truth is that Mr. Obama can be expected to promote a racial and political agenda that is as antiwhite and as left-wing as anything the Black Caucus or the Democratic Party itself ever proposes. The advantage he has over most of his comrades in this respect is that he can deploy his own multiracial identity to claim that he cannot be racially motivated, even as he supports antiwhite causes and measures. Mr. Obama, it turns out, is the one you cannot accuse of being racist.

Some of his comrades were slow to grasp what is going on, and, as *Newsweek* noted, one long-standing criticism of Mr. Obama among black radicals has been that he's "too white." Nevertheless, some are beginning to get it, and more will soon. Last summer, Newhouse News reporter Jonathan Tilove wrote an important story on Mr. Obama that made his new identity and its political utility clear. Thus, Angela Dillard, a black history professor at New York University, saw what was going on at once. "I think this is really the end of an era of race and politics," she chortled to Mr. Tilove. "Something's shifting and changing and people like [Al] Sharpton can't change with it, and something new and different is being created and it is about people like Obama."

Al Sharpton's presidential candidacy last year was a total bomb. His problem was that he is too black and alienates even other blacks, not to mention virtually all whites outside the readership of the *Nation*. Despite some obviously well-crafted image work, the Reverend Al will always remain the ranting racial demagogue who sponsored the Tawana Brawley fraud and used it to promote himself and his cronies. What Mr. Obama appears to offer is different, and probably far more dangerous. "I think he is talking about race when he's not," Professor Dillard said. "Something about the way he pitches things is perfect for this moment." More exactly, perhaps, Mr. Obama is talking about race when he seems to be talking about something else. That's what is dangerous, and from the perspective of the antiwhite left, white or nonwhite, that's what is "perfect for this moment."

Mr. Tilove also interviewed black Chicago congressman Danny Davis, who acknowledged that "black candidates seeking higher office are always on the knife's edge of either appearing to whites to be 'too strong on black-oriented issues' or, conversely, not strong enough for the black base." That was probably a polite way of saying that many of them, like the Reverend Al or Jesse Jackson, are simply "too black" to attract many white votes.

> But, Davis said, "it seems like Barack has this quality about him that makes people go for him," managing to win the hearts and minds of white voters in suburban and small-town Illinois while staying good "in the hood."

Mr. Obama's 92 percent of the Illinois black vote certainly helped, but what probably won him the election was the 66 percent of the state's white vote he carried (against the pathetic 31 percent Mr. Keyes took). By contrast, George W. Bush won a piddling 58 percent of the white vote nationally. The largest percentage of the white vote any Republican has won in recent decades is Richard Nixon's 67 percent in 1972. Mr. Obama is therefore competitive with Republicans in the core constituency of their party. You can understand why, for the Democrats, as political scientist Jeremy Mayer told Mr. Tilove, Mr. Obama "is a godsend."

Mr. Obama's own beliefs remain a mystery, though his background as a legislator and "community activist" show little deviation from conventional leftist poses. The line he currently seems to be promoting is that "we need new ideas" or some such banality. "One party seems to be defending a moribund status quo, and the other is defending a oligarchy," he intoned to *Newsweek*. It is not clear which party he believes is doing which, or what the difference is. *Newsweek* drooled over his convention speech as showing that "an upbeat 'One America' message still resonates" and purred that his "own rethinking of where the country should go still contains more questions than answers" but nevertheless insists that Mr. Obama is "about embracing our hybrid origins and transcending our often narrow-minded past."

And for all the staleness of that platitude, that is what Mr. Obama and his multiracial identity and his electrifying messages are really about. He is the messiah for the New America, the multiracial and multicultural mess toward which mass immigration and the dwindling birthrates of white Americans are leading, an America in which our "narrow-minded past" will be extirpated as surely as the Confederate flag and Christmas crèches have been in recent years. That kind of symbolic and ceremonial "transcendence" is only the beginning, of course, and ultimately the real "transcendence" will be the homogenization of race, culture, region, class, religion, and nation into the same stew—the real meaning of the "Melting Pot" that Israel Zangwill brewed in his insipid play of that name more than a hundred years ago. Mr. Obama may or may not become vice president or president, but the rulers of the New America will have to be people largely indistinguishable from him, and, if his performance in the Illinois election is any indication, few Americans, white or black, see anything wrong with it. ◁

SAMUEL FRANCIS
Principalities & Powers
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by Scott P. Richert

Three Strikes and You're Out

April 2005 will mark the third mayoral election since I arrived in Rockford at the end of 1995. In that first election in April 1997, Rockford's first (and, so far, only) black mayor, Democrat Charles Box, was running for his third term. For eight years, the city had been under a federal court order to desegregate its schools; the school board had imposed taxation without a popular referendum (later declared illegal by the Illinois Supreme Court) to pay for the lawsuit, which ultimately cost Rockford's taxpayers a third of a billion dollars; and the city's residential neighborhoods were crumbling under the highest property-tax rates in the nation.

The protest against the illegal tax, led by the redoubtable Mary Hitchcock and the indefatigable Barb Dent and fought *pro bono* in the courts by the heroic Michael O'Brien, was at its peak; The Rockford Institute turned out over 700 people on a cold, snowy, and icy night in February for a rally against judicial tyranny; and all Mayor Box could bring himself to do was to advise the taxpayers of Rockford to "belly up to the bar."

Black families were having their homes taken from them through eminent domain in order to build palatial "magnet schools" (equipped with planetaria and Olympic-sized swimming pools) that were somehow supposed to rectify discrimination against those same black families; allegations of corruption against Box and his administration (including collusion with public-works contractors who had financed Box's mayoral campaigns and for whom, after he left office, he would go to work) were widespread; and, when the dust had settled, Box had been reelected to his third term.

Four years later, Mayor Box having announced his retirement, the Democratic mantle passed to Doug Scott, who had served as city legal director under Box before moving up to the state legislature, backed by the same public-works contractors who had funded Box. As a state representative, Scott's most-important legislative initiative was a bill that would have legalized euthanasia, not exactly a popular measure in this staid Midwestern town. Publicly identified with Box's stand on the school-desegregation lawsuit (Scott had consistently refused to take any action against the illegal taxation imposed by the school board), Scott was also widely criticized for having sponsored legislation allowing Winnebago County to employ "Quick Take," a particularly virulent form of eminent domain that allows a governmental body to seize private property first and negotiate a price later. (Traditionally, under eminent domain, the owner retains control of the property until he has been paid, which allows him, if he can afford a competent lawyer, to negotiate something close to a just price. Under "Quick Take," however, government has no need to play fair, since the property is transferred at the beginning of the process.) Blind veteran Tom Ditzler had lost over half of his rural homestead west of Rockford in a "Quick Take" action that made the front page of the *Chicago Tribune* when a local activist tried to chain himself to a tree to prevent its destruction by a bulldozer.

And, when the dust had settled, Doug Scott was elected mayor of Rockford in April 2001.

Why, in a city routinely described (at least until recently) as Republican have the Democrats won six mayoral elections straight? (Democrat John McNamara was in office for two terms in the 1980's before handing the mantle over to his city legal director, Charles Box, and returning to the "private sector" to become president of the parent company of the public-works contractor that backed McNamara, Box, and Scott.) Partly, it can be attributed to the dynastic effect that we see at work in national elections as well; and, partly, well, the times, they are a-changin'. The erosion of Rockford's manufacturing base, whose owners and workers have traditionally voted Republican; white and middle-class flight during the 13 years of the federal desegregation lawsuit; and increased immigration (Rockford's Hispanic population grew from around two percent of the total population in 1990 to just under ten percent in 2000) have combined to tip the political balance. Today, Rockford is either evenly split (as the city council, in fact, is) or trending Democratic. By no means, however, should the mayor's office be out of play for the Republicans.

Still, come April 5, Doug Scott will be reelected for his second term, despite a lackluster first term that has satisfied neither his critics nor his supporters. Rockford's downtown, though arguably no worse off than when Scott took office, has not experienced the revival he promised; over 11,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost over the past four years; minor-league sports teams and important new business ventures have been snapped up by surrounding cities and counties. Over the last six months, the city has engaged in a frenzy of road projects, presumably to provide Scott with one accomplishment he can point to in his reelection campaign; the main effect, however, has been to anger drivers (some of whom do vote), who have found crosstown trips doubling or tripling in time (if, indeed, they can even get there from here).

So why am I certain that Mayor Scott will win reelection? Because, for the third time in a row, the local Republicans have put up a losing candidate. In 1997, they nominated W. Timothy Simms, a former state legislator and Rockford alderman who had, over the years, turned off many older Rockfordians with his imperious, self-righteous attitude. Sick as people were of the Box regime, Simms' campaign did not lack for volunteers, but the campaign managers made very poor use of them, calling the same Republican voters as many as five times during the campaign to ask them whether they intended to vote for Simms. Caught up in conspiracy theories about the connections and past actions of Box's financial supporters, Simms and his cronies refused to address the question of the influence of public-works contractors directly; the closest they dared come was a cute little commercial, which ran a few times only days before

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the election, showing a remote-control car crashing into a pothole.

(Several years after his loss, Simms was elected to the county board, where he is now the Republican majority leader. His actions there, including spearheading the effort to acquire St. Mary's Oratory in downtown Rockford to make room for the new Winnebago County jail, have made even some of his former supporters—myself included—conclude that, as bad as the Box regime was, the city may have dodged a bullet when Box was reelected.)

By 2001, the political landscape had changed somewhat. With Box departing, the field was wide open, and Larry Morrissey, a lawyer in his early 30's whose family has long been Democratic, announced his candidacy as an independent. While Morrissey was able to take advantage of some of the anties-tablishment groundswell generated by the desegregation lawsuit and the Ditzler "Quick Take," he refused to take a strong public stance on either issue and had trouble articulating an agenda other than the revitalization of downtown, which happens to be where most of his family's real-estate investments lie. Doug Scott, however, also promised to focus on downtown and, during his campaign, wisely distanced himself from those who had funded his career in the legislature.

Rather than turning to one of their leaders on the city council, the Republicans chose Denny Johnson, a businessman, Republican financier, and evangelical Christian whose commitment to the latter was called into question by his service on the board of directors of Swedish-American Hospital, which not only employed Richard Ragsdale, the only abortionist in Rockford, but had made him head of obstetrics. Because of his position with Swedish-American, Johnson had supported Mayor Box's last major initiative, which involved the use of public funds to tear down dozens of homes and reroute Charles Street south of the hospital so that Swedish-American, a private business, could expand dramatically. Indeed, Johnson's main campaign promise was that he would turn Rockford into the "Mayo Clinic of northern Illinois."

And Doug Scott's former backers, from whom he was actively distancing himself? They showed up as donors in Denny Johnson's campaign-finance disclosure forms, and Johnson chose Mayor Box's campaign-finance chairman to perform the same function for him.

It's no surprise, then, that Johnson was not only unable to excite much of the Republican base but actually lost some of the more diehard activists to Morrissey, who put in a strong third-place showing. Even so, Morrissey seems to have drawn more votes from the Democrats than from the Republicans, which indicates the fundamental weakness of Johnson's candidacy. (That weakness was illustrated as well by the rather successful attempts of some Republicans to spread the rumor that the unmarried Morrissey is a homosexual.)

Which brings us back to the current race, though that term is a bit of an overstatement to describe an election in which the Republican candidate, two-and-a-half months before the election, has made no visible sign of her candidacy. In fact, I wasn't even aware the Republicans had finally settled on a candidate until about three weeks after Gloria Cardenas Cudia, a former Rockford school-board member and failed candidate for state legislature, formally announced in early December. There had been rumors that some prominent Republicans had argued that the party should unofficially support Larry Morrissey, who is running as an independent once more, by not fielding a candidate. In a two-man race, Morrissey might well have a chance at beating Doug Scott; in a three-person race, however, Scott will return to the mayor's office.

There is an argument to be made that the local Republican Party, in order to remain viable in future mayoral elections, had to field a candidate in this one—even a candidate that no Republican leader seriously expects to win. But there are candidates, and then there are candidates, as Alan Keyes proved in his recent "run" for U.S. Senate here in Illinois. Gloria does not have the drawbacks that Keyes had—she is calm, charming, polite, helpful—but neither does she have Keyes' fire. As a school-board member, she did not offer much aid and comfort to those of us who opposed the desegregation lawsuit, but she wasn't the worst of the lot, either. In the end, she's simply a nice, civic-minded, Christian woman who reminds Hispanics that they are allowed to vote Republican, too.

What the Republicans really needed was a strong, energetic, and preferably young candidate who understands the manufacturing crisis in Rockford, could present cogently and coherently the failure of Mayor Scott to address the issue, and could offer a viable alternative. While Scott has pledged $50,000 in city funds to help get the Manufacturing Alliance of the Rock River Valley ("a non-profit organization directed to bring manufacturing contracts into the region that individual companies couldn't bring in on their own") off the ground, he has been strangely nonchalant while other cities, such as Nashville, have successfully courted long-time Rockford manufacturers.

In the current campaign, Morrissey is still focused on downtown; he not only seems uninterested in manufacturing but has failed to attend manufacturing-related events that a mayoral candidate should have had on the top of his daily calendar. In the end, Morrissey suffers from a certain failure of vision: A revitalized downtown will not turn manufacturing in Rockford around; a revivified manufacturing sector, however, might also revive downtown.

A Republican candidate with strong credentials in manufacturing would have been able to marginalize Morrissey and put Scott on the defensive—someone like Eric Anderberg, a contemporary of Larry Morrissey and general manager of Dial Machine, who has testified before Congress on the manufacturing crisis in Rockford and has been featured in numerous national articles on the topic.

Local Republicans, however, regard such people as outsiders (unless, like Denny Johnson, they have given enormous sums to local politicians), and they would rather go with an active party loyalist such as Cardenas Cudia, even if that means losing the election. In trying to protect the party, however, they may ultimately have destroyed its chances at ever recapturing City Hall. When the votes are counted on April 5, the Republican Party will likely become the third party in Rockford, with Morrissey coming within striking distance of Mayor Scott and Cardenas Cudia trailing Morrissey significantly at the polls. And with the Republicans safely out of the picture, Larry Morrissey may find that, in 2009, the third time's the charm. C

THE ROCKFORD files
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Letter From the Netherlands

by Alberto Carosa

From Mercy Killing to Euthanasia

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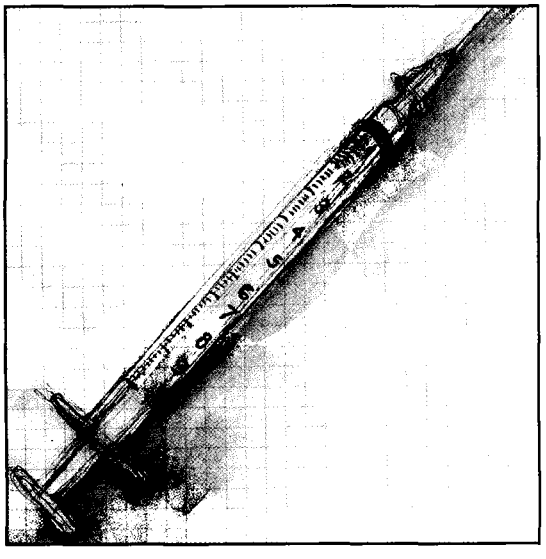
In late 2000, the Netherlands became the first country to legalize euthanasia. Under the law, passed by the lower house of the Dutch Parliament 104-40, a child as young as 12 can request to be put to death, provided he has at least one parent's consent.

In 1999 alone, according to the Associated Press (July 13, 2000), 2,216 Netherlanders died from euthanasia or "physician-assisted suicide," usually through lethal injection. The new law simply formalized the guidelines that had been in place since 1994, requiring that patients must be suffering unbearable pain, be told of all available options, and make the request to die of their own accord, unprompted by a doctor. Doctors must also obtain a second opinion and report each case.

The NVVE (Nederlandse Vereniging voor een Vrijwillig Levenseinde, the Dutch Voluntary Euthanasia Society) boldly proclaimed that the new law would be a step toward public acceptance of the "right to die"—not just for patients at late stages of serious illness but for anyone who expected "not to be able to die [in a] dignified [manner]." The society argued that it was simply defending a "human basic right—if you can choose what kind of house you're going to live in and things like that, why can you not choose what death? It's an individual choice . . . your life."



Elizabeth Wolf

Even without resorting to religious or philosophical tenets and convictions, this argument can be easily rebutted by common sense and experience. If we accept that individual choice and autonomy has been elevated above all other values, where are we going to place the goalposts? And who will decide? Once the right to life is placed in jeopardy, all kinds of abuses ensue, as the abortion saga has amply shown.

The alleged "right to die with dignity" has become the "right to be killed." Euthanasia advocates are demanding that doctors become killers, transforming those who save life into dispensers of death. And this is precisely what is happening in the Netherlands, where the distinction between stopping useless medical treatment and the administering of lethal injections is being blurred by the promoters of euthanasia.

This distinction is very important. If a patient has advanced cancer, he does not have to undergo painful operations that are not really going to prolong life. He can say: "I have had enough, the medical treatment or operations must cease." And medical personnel can then give the patient only food and water and pain-relief treatment. Euthanasia, however, is not letting a patient die but killing a patient who is not dying—or is not dying on the timetable those who anticipate his death would prefer.

Earlier this year, the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that, in a number of cases of euthanasia in the Netherlands, death had not always occurred in a dignified manner. The journal cited instances of vomiting and convulsions, a lengthy interval between the administration of the lethal drug and death, failure to induce a coma, and patients awakening out of an induced coma.

Once euthanasia is legalized, even in limited circumstances, the practice soon spreads. The "right to be killed" will quickly become the "duty to die"—especially in the case of older people, who feel that they are a burden on their families or on the national health service. And today, infants are often thought to be a burden in the Netherlands: As many as eight percent of infant deaths have been reported to be infanticides performed by medical staff.

On average, according to a December 21, 2004, report in the *Guardian*, once a month somewhere in the Netherlands, a doctor injects a newborn baby with a lethal cocktail of morphine and sedatives. Within a few hours, the baby is dead. The agonizing decision is often made because the newborn has a life-threatening illness or disability with little or no prospect of successful treatment or recovery. Routinely, the killings are carried out in secret, and the cause of death is covered up. Death certificates are falsified in order to render the doctors immune to prosecution for murder.

The Groningen Academic Hospital admitted to engaging in such practices with three babies in 2003. This is the very hospital that spearheaded the cause of euthanasia by striking, last fall, an accord with the judiciary that its doctors would not be prosecuted and asking the Dutch government to approve guidelines legalizing euthanasia of newborns enduring "unbearable suffering" and with "no hope of a future." A health-ministry official has said that the government is expected to present a relevant bill to parliament in early 2005. This bill is also being supported by the Netherlands' eight teaching hospitals. Ten to 15 cases of child euthanasia occur in the Netherlands each year, and there are an estimated 600 instances worldwide.

On December 10, Groningen pediatrics chief Dr. A. Verhagen attempted to justify this legislation, stating that the law is merely aimed at bringing into the open a practice that is already being conducted in secret. "Worldwide, the U.S. included, many deaths among newborns are based on end-of-life decisions, after physicians reached the conclusion that there was no quality of life," Verhagen claimed.

> It is in the interest of newborns who have to endure unbearable suffering that we draw up a nationwide protocol that allows each pediatrician to treat this delicate

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question with due care, knowing that he followed the criteria.

"[Y]ou should never aim to kill a person. That's the bottom line," responded Bert Dorenbos, the leader of Dutch pro-life group Cry for Life. He argued that the Dutch euthanasia laws have served primarily to protect doctors from prosecution rather than to safeguard the interests of children. The "Groningen protocol" for child euthanasia establishes a five-part test to help doctors avoid possible prosecution until a suitable law can be passed. The five conditions to be met are severe suffering; no available treatment or surgery; the consent of the parents; a second opinion by an independent committee of doctors; and a "meticulously carried out" termination of life. Outside of these boundaries, a doctor who terminated the life of a very ill newborn, even at the request of his parents, would still run the risk of prosecution.

The establishment of "independent committees" to dispatch unwilling humans is nothing but a death-penalty committee for innocents, claims Earl Edwin Appleby, Jr., director of the U.S.-based Citizens United Resisting Euthanasia, a group in the forefront of the fight against epivalothanasia (imposed death). "Once begun, it is impossible—simply impossible—to limit the concept with any bright line," he contends.

> If the "severely retarded" may be killed upon appropriate motion, second, debate, and majority vote, why not the moderately retarded? Why not the mildly retarded? Why not, in fact, anyone the "independent Committee" deems as usefully dispatched?

Italian judge Giuseppe Ananzi argues that this unholy alliance between Dutch prosecutors and doctors makes a mockery of the rule of law. "It is a reflection of a law-unabiding attitude and complicity which devastates the very concept of judicial dispensation."

In a conversation we had years ago, Babette Francis, a prominent Catholic pro-life leader from Australia, recalled having met at an international conference a chief public prosecutor from the Netherlands who was also the president of the NVVE. She questioned him about the 1993 Remmelink report by the Dutch government, which showed that a very high percentage of the victims of euthanasia in the Netherlands had not requested it: They were simply murdered. "How do you explain this?" she challenged him. He refused to answer, simply saying, "Oh, it'll take too long to explain!"

In his very interesting talk, this prosecutor said that, although euthanasia was theoretically illegal in the Netherlands, officials refused to prosecute if certain safeguards and codes were followed. In fact, he added, only one or two cases had ever been prosecuted, and they never really came to the higher court. And then he revealed that he, while president of the NVVE, was a chief prosecutor who decided which cases were going to be investigated. "This is the most obvious conflict of interest that I could think of," Mrs. Francis told me. "No wonder, then, that so few cases in the Netherlands are prosecuted."

Bishop Elio Sgreccia of the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life likened child euthanasia to the Nazis' mass murder of 70,000 physically and mentally disabled under the euphemism of euthanasia. The Vatican accusations, in turn, caused great distress to the pediatricians who argue that these end-of-life decisions should be properly examined and not practiced in the dark.

The Netherlands, once a victim of Nazi occupation, has now turned into a Nazi-style victimizer nation, implementing antilife measures at the expense of her own infants, the most defenseless victims of the culture of death. The Allies liberated Holland in 1945. Who will free the victims of today's crimes against humanity in the Netherlands?

Alberto Carosa is a journalist who writes from Rome.

Letter From Germany

by Josef Schüsslburner

The Yoke of Democracy

◆

In a strange way, it appears that Adolf Hitler is still ruling Germany. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the forces of "democracy," in the form of political parties, make political decisions by implementing the opposite of what they assume Hitler would have wanted. Those political parties, the governing opposition, are "democratic" because American military rule has approved them. In the case of the Green Party, which emerged long after the end of the occupation period, the White House has accepted the statement of Petra Kelly and General Bastian (leading figures of the founding period) during their pilgrimage to the Potomac that the Greens would represent the type of Germans that the Americans had always wanted to bring to power, even though this party encompasses for-

LIBERAL ARTS

IF THEY ONLY KNEW OUR MOTIVES

"The Post: How concerned are you about the enormously high levels of anti-Americanism, particularly in the Muslim world? And is that an indication that somehow the terrorists are winning the hearts and minds of those people?

"THE PRESIDENT: . . . [T]here's no question we've got to continue to do a better job of explaining what America is all about; that in our country you're free to worship as you see fit, that we honor the Muslim faith, and that if you choose not to—we don't want territory, we want there to be freedom. And I've talked to Condi [Rice, the nominee for secretary of state] about this, and she agrees that we need to work on a public diplomacy effort that explains our motives and explains our intentions.

"I also believe that some of the decisions I've made up to now have affected our standing in parts of the world. I remember in the debates, somebody asked me about Europe. And I said, well, they wanted us to join the International Criminal Court, and I chose—I said, that's not the right posture for the United States of America, or some saying I should have negotiated with [Yasser] Arafat for the four years I was president—obviously, prior to his death—and I chose not to because I didn't feel like he was a person who could deliver peace."

—*from a* Washington Post *interview with President George W. Bush (January 16, 2005)*

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mer admirers of Mao and Pol Pot. The primary purpose of elections in Germany is not to select a government but to ensure that the population (*people* is considered to be a Hitlerite term) or human beings (*Menschen*, the term increasingly used instead of *people*, *citizens*, or *nation*) ratify the rule of the democratic forces. The established German political class longs for a legitimacy that mere elections are not able to provide. The most prominent method that they employ to gain the desired legitimacy is to make the official interpretation of recent history (*Geschichtspolitik*) more or less binding and to celebrate relevant historical events.

Most significant in 2004 was the official remembrance of the 60th anniversary of the assassination attempt against Hitler on July 20, 1944. Official commemoration of this event did not previously play such a prominent role, because it has been difficult to fit this event into the accepted ideological framework of the postwar period. The leading actors of that failed conspiracy obviously did not want to establish the FRG but to maintain the German Reich (including some of Hitler's territorial acquisitions) without the dictatorship and the corrosion of the rule of law that characterized Nazi rule. Though the extensive network that attempted to oust Hitler comprised people of different political convictions, it was essentially a German conservative and right-wing endeavor against national socialism. If successful, Hitler would have been replaced as chancellor by Carl Friedrich Gördeler, who was elected mayor of Leipzig on the ticket of a nationalist party. He was allowed to occupy this post after 1933 but resigned in 1937 in protest of the official removal of the statue of German-Jewish composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

Elizabeth Wolf

As provisional head of state, conservative Gen. Ludwig Beck would have been installed. Most of the leading conspirators hoped for the reestablishment of the Hohenzollern monarchy at a later stage. The plot can legitimately be considered a last Prussian attempt to avert the destruction of Germany by both modern national socialism and the democratizing enemy states, which included not only the United States but the special "democracy" of the Soviet Union. The greatest risks in this conspiracy were undertaken by members of the traditional aristocracy, the most prominent of whom was Col. Count Claus von Stauffenberg, who placed the bomb in Hitler's bunker.

Had the plot been successful, the war would not have ended, though the plotters had worked and hoped for this result. The Allied Powers, especially Britain under Churchill, had rejected any approach by the German military opposition to get an assurance to this end. The Allies' refusal even to discuss the matter was a major reason why the assassination attempt—already under consideration in 1938 at the highest levels of the German military—came so late and why no open popular resistance against national socialism could be created. A successful coup would have revealed that the Allies did not fight Nazism primarily; rather, Nazism gave them the moral pretext to pursue certain goals that they had not successfully gained (or had abandoned) in World War I. What, for example, did the mass expulsion of Germans from the eastern territories have to do with the democratization of Germany?

Another question reveals why the commemoration of this assault does not fit into political interests of the postwar period: How was it possible to organize such a rebellion at a high institutional level (including the head of the German foreign secret service under Adm. Wilhelm Canaris) in a regime such as Hitler's? Would such an attempt have been possible in Stalin's Russia? The obvious answer is that Hitler's dictatorship was not as totalitarian as that of the Soviet Union. But if fighting totalitarianism was President Roosevelt's primary concern, why was there no American war against Soviet Russia, when the Hitler-Stalin pact had been a necessary condition for the outbreak of World War II? Such questions reveal why the common German soldier found no reason to believe the Allies' stated war aims. The demand of unconditional surrender gave these soldiers no choice but to fight for their country—even if she were ruled by Hitler—a condition that thwarted any attempt to eliminate Hitler from within. The German military resistance also had to accept that situation; but, according to Adam von Trott zu Solz (the leading conservative organizer of the plot), the attempt still had to be made, even if unsuccessful, as a moral gesture—God would save a people if but a few were just.

For Hitler, the conspiracy confirmed that Stalin had been the better socialist. Stalin had purged the armed forces of the remnants of the czarist period, whereas Hitler, as a result of his strategy to come to power democratically, had prevented himself from proceeding forcefully against the German right, which remained established in the military, the bureaucracy, and in business. Hitler's legal acquisition of power and connected compromises, in contrast to the Soviets' murderous civil war, gave the national-socialist regime the appearance of a more traditional Latin American-style dictatorship than Hitler had intended. To a certain extent, Hitler tried to rectify that "mistake" by a purge following the coup attempt, and a Soviet-style terror policy was finally implemented, personified in the presiding judge of the Special Court, Roland Freisler, who had gained some experience in these matters as a communist commissioner in the Ukraine in the 1920's. (The normal German courts had not been brought sufficiently in line to use them to employ Stalinesque "legal" procedures.)

The full-scale suppression of the German right by Hitler after the coup attempt was perfectly compatible with the Allied aim of democratizing Germany. This is proved by the fact that the BBC reported the names of some plotters before the Nazi secret police could have found them out.

American democratization policy ensured that no German right-wing party would be licensed by the American occupation; and, after the occupation, the emergence of such parties would be prevented by the official "history policy" that suggested that Hitler's rise to power happened not as a result of democratization after World War I but of the German-Prussian "authoritarianism" of the 19th century (under which Hitler would never have gained power). Had the plotters formed a political party with the same

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agenda that motivated their action against Hitler, that party would likely have been prohibited in "liberated" and "democratized" Germany!

Considering those historical circumstances, it appears very unlikely that the commemoration of the events of July 20, 1944, will help to legitimize the political class of the FRG, whose major belief is that May 8, 1945, constitutes liberation and not defeat, despite the loss of one third of German territory, the separation of Austria, the mass expulsion of Germans, the mass raping of German women by Soviet soldiers, and so on. Official reinterpretation of historical events on a grand scale is necessary to bring both the motives and the purposes of the plotters of 1944 in line with the political agenda of the current period, which aims at the dissolution of European nations, especially the German nation (since, they assume, Hitler would have done the opposite).

The self-contradictions of the official "history policy" of the German government are too obvious to be convincing to the public. On the other hand, a pact has been established between the political class and the people at large in postwar Germany: *You politicians give us economic affluence, and we will tolerate or even accept the ideological doctrines that you consider a prerequisite of democracy.* This compromise does not really solve the basic problem of political legitimacy, since an economic crisis is very likely to turn out perilously for the current German political system, bringing that very system under close scrutiny.

Josef Schüsslburner is the author, most recently, of Demokratie-Sonderweg Bundesrepublik Analyse der Herrschaftsordnung in Deutschland.

Letter From New York

by Michael J. Sauter

Everybody Hans Küng Tonight!

◆

"If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?" This old bit of black humor popped into my mind as I drove home from a local college after attending a lecture, entitled "My Long Road to a Global Ethic," delivered by dissident Catholic theologian Hans Küng. "It would simply be too coincidental," I thought to myself, "if *that* guy, who gave *that* lecture, who was *that* conceited, who didn't use the C-word in *that* book of his (and was, incidentally, *that* good looking) . . . was also a vegetarian." After all, it's one thing to study apocalyptic thought (as I have); it is quite another to have taken in a lecture given by Soloviev's Antichrist himself!

Not-so-simply put: It would take more fudging and stretching of Nostradamus's gazillion quatrains composed in multiple languages to make someone like Stalin fit just one of the Antichrists in his cryptic three-Antichrist scheme than it does to make Hans Küng the one and only archdemon in the scheme of Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev's "Short Tale of the Antichrist" (1900). The similarities (Soloviev's vegetarian requirement notwithstanding) are positively creepy.

Soloviev wrote of the Antichrist: "His famous work [is] entitled *The Open Way to Universal Peace and Prosperity*." Hans Küng is the author of *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic.*

Soloviev continued: "He appeared on the platform in all the glamour of youthful superhuman beauty." An elderly female acquaintance of mine in the audience at Küng's lecture said, "Gosh, his appearance was stunning! I don't know how he can still look so young."

Soloviev: "The Moral Achievement of Christ and his uniqueness were beyond an intellect so completely clouded by self-love as his." Küng (notorious for having a huge ego), averred: "I know Roman Catholic theology perfectly." "I spoke yesterday at the U.N." "I've had Tony Blair, Mary Robinson, and Kofi Annan to my Institute in Tübingen."

Soloviev: "It is true some pious people, while praising the book wholeheartedly, had been asking why the name of Christ was never mentioned in it." Küng: (in *Global Responsibility*): . . . ? (See below.)

In all fairness, since I do not even hold on to labels I apply to myself after I've gleaned a few insights, I will give the estimable Father Küng the same respect and say that I honestly do not think that he is the Antichrist. Not at all. In fact, he seemed like a nice guy. I will say, however, that he does seem to have a very anti-Christian strain to his thought. The "scandal of particularity" in Christian thought is not a scandal to Küng. It is simply ignored.

The chapter entitled "Specific Christian Contributions" in *Global Responsibility* is a classic example of this anti-Christian worldview. Küng does use the word *Christian* a couple of times, though it is combined with such questionable assertions and with such general statements that it becomes all but meaningless: "[M]ost Christian Churches have in principle affirmed the basic values and basic convictions of the French Revolution, which they had rejected for so long." And, further, "Indeed, Christianity aims at a change in the human beings from the center—of men and women in their confrontation with the Unconditioned, the Absolute, God himself." However, in this chapter on *Christian* contributions, there is strangely, (*à la* Soloviev), no mention made of Christ (or of His Church, for that matter). Küng does mention that the "postmodern requirements" of Christianity include "a way from the differences between poor and rich," "a way from the unemployment of millions of people," "a way from a world in which human rights are violated." There are *ways* for this and *ways* for that, *ways* here and *ways* there, but, again, strangely (or not so strangely), there is no mention of the Way—or the Truth or the Life.

I did not attend the lecture seeking to flirt with the dark side. Instead, like many, I went guessing that I would profit from touching a part of history. I was there as a student of theology willing to give a hearing to Küng's "Long Road to a Global Ethic" in the same way that some epicure, some 30 years down the road, might go to a lecture by Emeril Lagasse entitled "My Long Road to Bland Cooking." It was, therefore, a little depressing

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when I stumbled upon the similarities to Soloviev's Antichrist, especially since those attributes and that worldview are currently underwritten with a lot of power.

There is good news, however. Though the lecture hall was packed, it was packed with old people. They were mostly those American Catholics, 55 and over, who developed a spirituality in the late 60's that was primarily motivated, I would suggest, by guilt feelings and power fantasies connected to their own wealth and the wealth of their country. Then as now, they were absorbed in the disembodied, gnostic, Cartesian, godlike worldview espoused by the likes of Küng and Karl Rahner during those hazy days after the Second Vatican Council (which was wonderfully exposed by Fergus Kerr in his 1986 book *Theology After Wittgenstein*).

Though this demographic group still has deep pockets and political power and will control the politics of the American Church for a little while longer, my experience in campus ministry suggests that its spiritual hold on the younger generations is weak. Fatigued from looking at everything, including "religions," as Hans Küng does—from a godlike, fleshless, and rootless distance—many of the students I meet are hungry for the real friendship, faith, and love that they read about in their humanities courses at the college (when they keep their eyes open).

Coming back down to earth, they are also quite willing, and even hungry, to perceive important distinctions that are lost on the likes of Küng and those with a global worldview—differences such as that between home-cooked meals and TV dinners; between getting an education and going to school; between dignified labor and "full employment"; and, as Bill Kauffman says in commenting on the difference between Arbor Day and Earth Day, "the difference between planting a tree in your backyard and e-mailing a machine-written plea for a global warming treaty to your UN representative."

Contra Küng, of whom (and to his great wonderment, I'm sure) none of the students I spoke with had heard, most students at my little liberal-arts college seem quite willing to forego "global responsibility" and its connotations of power in order to brighten the corner where they live. And, though things like "human rights" and "Parliaments of World Religions" still fascinate some, I think that today it is more of an age-old youthful enthusiasm for all things exotic, a passion that will probably mellow with age.

Finally, for all of Father Küng's impressive knowledge of Scripture, theology, and philosophy, and for all of his power flowing from his connections with heads of state, the United Nations, and the likes of George Soros (through the United Religions Initiative and the Global Dialogue Institute, which are both supporters of Küng's central project, the "Declaration of the Religions for a Global Ethic"), he seems to have missed one Gospel lesson that is eternal and that students today are noticing more clearly as the "blowback" of charity-underwritten-by-power dominates their TV screens. When it comes to the corrupting influence of power, even as it is played out in the Body of Christ, no matter how you try to hide it, dress it, or change its name; no matter how popular you are in your own eyes or in the eyes of your groupies; no matter how good your intentions or how much your efforts may effectively mask or mimic the work of Christ, you are just spitting into the wind when you play the fool's game of attempting to cast out Satan by means of that same Satan.

Sorry, Father Küng.

Michael J. Sauter writes from Geneseo, New York.

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When 15 states peacefully seceded from the Soviet Union, it was a little over 70 years old. This was the same age as the American Union when, in 1861, 11 states voted to secede and form a federation of their own. But whereas the rulers, of what Reagan called "the evil empire," negotiated a peaceful dissolution, Lincoln launched the bloodiest war of the 19th century to maintain a territorial monopoly on coercion. Adjusted for today's population, the war would have yielded more than 5 million battle deaths and more than twice that many wounded and maimed. And this does not include civilian casualties.

Americans have never come to terms with the stark immorality of this barbarism. The war transformed America from the federative polity of the Framers—rooted in State and local sovereignty—into the vast centralized empire we have today. At a time when Democrats are entertaining thoughts about blue states seceding from red, it is fitting to begin a thoughtful examination of the Lincolnian myths and symbols that have both legitimated this transformation to empire and have hidden from view the federative polity of the Framers that was lost—but still might, in some new form, be regained.

FACULTY: Thomas DiLorenzo (Loyola College, Maryland), Marshall DeRosa (Florida Atlantic University), Donald Livingston (Emory University), Clyde Wilson (University of South Carolina), William Wilson (University of Virginia), Roger Busbice (Nicholls State University), Joseph Stromberg (Von Mises Institute), Scott Trask (author and historian), Carey Roberts (Arkansas Tech University), and Marco Bassani (University of Milan, Italy).

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by Srdja Trifkovic

A Glimmer of Hope in the Holy Land

Mahmoud Abbas's convincing victory in the Palestinian presidential election on January 9 provided a piece of good news in an otherwise somber Middle Eastern landscape. Often described as an old Fatah apparatchik with little charisma and popularity, Abbas managed to win 62 percent of the 775,000 votes cast in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, with about one half of all eligible voters taking part. His closest challenger, the leftist independent Mustafa Barghuthi, came in second with one fifth of the vote; five also-rans divided the remaining 18 percent.

The man known to his followers as Abu Mazen is, in Palestinian terms, a moderate, which means that he advocates a two-state solution and realizes that "the right of return" of 1948 refugees is a tradeable political commodity, not a program. He now has an unexpectedly sound mandate to pursue the pragmatic course that marked his four months as prime minister in 2003. He needs to use that mandate to help revive the stalled peace process, to rein in the militants, and to reform the corrupt and inefficient Palestinian Authority (PA).

All three tasks will entail making unpopular decisions that may soon erode his standing and elicit resistance from the old Arafat loyalists whose support Abbas will need to be successful. That standing will depend entirely on what he can deliver to his people—and how quickly. That it can be done was shown over three decades ago by Anwar Sadat, the heir of Nasser, another charismatic but useless Arab leader. This parallel also points to the most serious threat he faces: assassination.

With Abbas's election, the post-Arafat era has finally started in earnest, to the relief of all parties—except for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Abbas felt compelled to pay lavish tribute to his predecessor in his victory speech, but he knows that Arafat's inept and corrupt leadership had been the bane of the Palestinians for many years. In his final years, he was devoid of any power to direct the Palestinian-Israeli crisis and of the imagination and courage to help resolve it.

Arafat's mendacity and ineptitude had suited Sharon to a tee. Sharon's government never seriously intended to evacuate the occupied territories in the West Bank and to dismantle the settlements (except for Gaza, which is outside his ideological purview). This was obvious when Sharon stated in Aqaba, after a meeting with Abbas in June 2003, that "we understand the importance of territorial contiguity in the West Bank for a viable Palestinian state." Of course, "contiguity" could be an issue only in the context of a continued Israeli presence in the West Bank. Perhaps unwittingly, Mr. Sharon admitted that he wanted a truncated Palestinian "state" with limited self-government *within* a greater Israel.

It was on that basis that Mr. Sharon accepted the concept of President Bush's Road Map, and it was for that reason that he made his acceptance conditional on subsequent Israeli provisos and amendments. The lack of adverse reaction from Washington has enabled him to pursue building the wall of separation, mostly inside the West Bank, that turned the Palestinian areas into a patchwork of easily enclosed enclaves. Encouraged by Mr. Bush's tacit support, he went on to consolidate the settlements and to lay the groundwork for further annexations. Arafat's death and Abbas's election—coupled with the new "national unity" coalition in Israel that includes Labor—will make it more difficult for Sharon to carry on as before, however. If Abbas moves swiftly to halt violence, the Israeli leader will no longer be able to justify such policies on security grounds.

If Abbas also makes progress in reforming the Palestinian Authority, Sharon's contention that it is just another corrupt Arab autocracy will sound equally hollow. One little-noticed consequence of the Palestinian election is that Israel's claim to be "the only democracy in the Middle East" is becoming tenuous. The PA is still far from being a "Western-style" democracy, but, compared with the rest of the Arab world, it is doing a good job. To hold an election under occupation was a challenge, even without the complexities of the Palestinian political and security situation. There may have been a few electoral irregularities, but they did not affect the outcome. The preelection media debate in the PA was open and dynamic. If Iraq is able to hold an election like that, Mr. Bush will be able to declare victory and pack up shop.

The militants did not take part and called for a boycott, but that they did not disrupt the vote is in itself encouraging. Hamas was in a bind. On the one hand, it was afraid of losing to Abbas if it fielded its own candidate, and it was loath to create the impression that it accepted the legitimacy of Israel, which is implicit in the acceptance of the Oslo-founded Palestinian Authority as a valid political battleground. On the other hand, using violence to stop the vote would have been fatal to a later attempt to build up the electoral base, if Hamas enters the political fray. It may decide to do so a year from now, hoping that, by that time, Abbas's position will be weakened by Sharon's intransigence and American timidity toward him.

The United States has an opportunity to help herself by helping Abbas. His predicament from the brief period of his prime ministership in the summer of 2003 must not be repeated. Back then, his public commitment to the Road Map was based on the American promise that it would not be open to revision. When Sharon promptly started rewriting the rules, Abbas could not continue promoting the plan without appearing as a foreign stooge or, worse, a fool. He felt abandoned by the U.S. administration that claimed to support him but gave him no real breaks. By September of that year, he had to resign.

The attainment of American interests in the Middle East demands the emergence and survival—political and physical—of a Palestinian leader that we can do business with and whom Israel cannot discount as corrupt or tainted by terrorism. Those interests are simple: peace and stability, maintained at little or no

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cost to the American taxpayer. There are no transcendent American objectives in the region, and no goals that cannot be quantified and subjected to a cost-benefit analysis. If there were a lasting peace in Israel-Palestine, continued and affordable access to Middle Eastern energy would be less uncertain, and the global war against Islamic terrorism could be waged more effectively.

These are essential objectives that demand cold realism in policymaking, including a break with the notion that there exists an *a priori* identity of national and security goals of the United States and her "strategic partner" Israel. Demystifying our relationship with Israel is the key to a more normal U.S. policy in the Middle East. It is especially important to discard the claim that Israel's conflict with the Palestinians is an offshoot of the U.S. war against Al Qaeda.

The absurd notion that Israeli interests and concerns—especially as articulated by Mr. Sharon—are, by definition, "American" interests and concerns has been imposed, systematically, on the American policymaking community and the media to the extent that the debate on the future of "the Holy Land" is more varied, more intelligent, and far more interesting in Israel than in the United States. Sane Israeli commentators seem to understand far better than their American counterparts that Israel is neither a divine covenant nor the 51st state.

The alternative to Abbas is the rise of someone who will advocate renewed violence against Israel and be sympathetic to the global *jihad* against the Great Satan. If that happens, fanatical Muslims will impose the banner of the prophet ever more starkly on what had been a nationalist cause. There will be no peace and no security. To prevent such nightmare, to help Abbas stay and prosper, Washington should ensure that the Palestinian Authority is rewarded if it maintains an effective cease-fire and embarks on a comprehensive program of domestic reforms. A suicide bomb or two should not be allowed to disrupt the process. (Former Israeli Prime Minister Rabin put it aptly: "[N]egotiate as if terrorism didn't exist, and fight terrorism as if negotiations didn't exist.")

Those rewards need to be both political and financial, and they should come swiftly. As for the money, what was pledged to the tsunami relief fund last January can easily be pledged to the PA if it stays the course. Colin Powell noted that humanitarian aid to Indonesia was "in our best interest, and it dries up those pools of dissatisfaction that might give rise to terrorist activity." By the same token, support given to a performing Palestinian Authority will yield even greater results, as it will help to lessen the perception in the Arab world that the United States supports Israel unreservedly. Of course, it will be necessary to develop a mechanism to monitor the aid process and prevent the misuse of funds, but that should be as acceptable to Abbas—who does not appear to be tainted by corruption—as it had been unacceptable to Arafat, who was steeped in graft.

The political reward for an enduring cease-fire should be threefold: an Israeli withdrawal to pre-Intifada positions, the release of nonterrorist Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, and a moratorium on any further settlement "consolidation." President Bush should make these promises to Abbas. Mr. Sharon's reluctance to go along should be reflected in an immediate reduction of the American subsidy to Israel—a subsidy that is, in any event, unnecessary and should be used as an active tool of U.S. policymaking.

The toughest task for the United States will be to encourage the Israeli government to accept the need for a final settlement within a reasonable time frame. Unlike Abbas, Sharon thinks that he is in no hurry. He is mistaken, because Israel cannot maintain her dominant position forever. Even if his calculus was sound from an Israeli point of view—and his new coalition partners from the Labor Party will likely beg to differ—maintaining the *status quo* is clearly at odds with the American interest, which should be the sole determinant of U.S. policy. Pressure from Washington is therefore sorely needed. The new policy may work if Sharon is finally told that the United States will no longer condone—let alone underwrite with *our* billions—an open-ended Israeli occupation of many parts of the West Bank and the ongoing expansion of Jewish settlements. The U.S. role in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, President Bush declared in June 2003, should be that of "driving both sides along and holding them accountable." Almost two years later, he should finally give it a try.

Pressure on Sharon to negotiate seriously is what America needs, it is what the rest of the world hopes for, and it is what many Israelis want. As *Ha'aretz* noted a week before Arafat's death,

> The Bush administration's welcome and unreserved support for Israel in the face of Palestinian terror was frequently also perceived as permission to reject every diplomatic initiative until the baseline conditions of the region had changed . . . [If] this conflict is once again on the brink of a turning point [it] would necessitate the mobilization of a determined U.S. government, which will want to reexamine the policy of shrugging its shoulders that has characterized it for the last four years.

The contours of that final settlement do exist. Abbas says that the least his people will accept is a Palestinian state on the land that was occupied by Israel in the 1967 war, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and he warns that "we cannot accept an agreement which does not offer a fair and negotiated solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees." This is not just an opening ploy: His meaning of the term *accept* is exact. The Palestinians may be forced to *endure* an unfavorable truce for a long time, but they are unlikely to let him *accept* any deal that gives them less than what was on the table at Taba. The map of January 2001 still provides the outline of a viable territorial settlement.

It is significant that Abbas refers to "a fair and negotiated solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees" rather than to the "right of return." He knows that, sooner or later, that "right" would have to be renounced in favor of some compensation formula. That formula will require a lot of money in order to sell it in Ramallah. This is where Washington can and should exert pressure on the royal Saudi kleptocrats to chip in a trillion or two. Other Arab states, especially Egypt and Jordan, as well as the European Union, should be invited to play a more active role in the peace process. They may be willing to do so if they see that, this time, Washington is serious about "driving both sides equally." The Arabs have leverage over the Palestinians, and, in addition to financial aid, they could train Abbas's security forces. The Europeans should be the major source of economic aid, and they may exert political leverage if the Palestinians start wavering at the last moment, as Arafat did at Camp David.

In the curious dialectic of the Middle East, Washington needs to be very deeply engaged to impose that settlement, in order to be able to disengage from the region thereafter, which should be the strategic objective. ◁c

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EUGENICS

And Death Shall Have No Dominion

by Marian Kester Coombs

Pundits have been calling them "designer babies" since the first egg was fertilized and nurtured *ex utero* more than a quarter-century ago. Little Louise Brown was her parents' biological child, however, who happened to begin life in a test tube for medical reasons: Her mother's Fallopian tubes were blocked. Pioneering British physicians used laparoscopy to remove one of Mrs. Brown's eggs, mixed it with Mr. Brown's sperm, and placed it in a nutritive medium for about three days before implanting the tiny ball of dividing cells back into the mother's body, where it thrived.

Many advances in biotechnology later, humans are on the verge of being able to craft embryos with preselected, even invented, traits. Oddly, the same people who deny that God designed the universe have no problem with humans having a go at it.

Reproductive technology already permits the cloning of existing genomes. In the nuclear-transfer method, a viable egg is suctioned, then electrically "fused" with another cell that need not be a gamete (sperm or egg). Gametes or sex cells are haploid, with only 23 chromosomes, while somatic cells are diploid, with 46 chromosomes. Having acquired its full complement of DNA, the recharged egg is chemically convinced it has been fertilized and starts to differentiate into an embryo. So far, or so we are told, all human clones produced by this method have been destroyed after a brief study period. Were one to be implanted into a womb, however, a woman could give birth to Napoleon, to one of the extinct Anasazi cave-dwellers, to her own sister, husband, grandfather, deceased child—or to herself.

Currently, the only way that *in vitro*-fertilized, cloned, or engineered embryos can survive to term is within the female reproductive system. Women had better hope this stays the case, since the majority of scientists are men who are not likely to render their own sex obsolete before remaindering the opposite one. Once scientists are routinely able to induce stem cells to behave like ova, then grow them into fetuses outside the womb, 'tis the abolition of *women* we will be looking at.

Women might want to ask for a redo of the recent study published in *Science* that shows they rate "taking care of their children" lower than "intimate relations," "socializing," "relaxing," "exercising," "watching television," or "preparing food"—and scarcely higher than "housework," "employment," or even "commuting." Men might rightly ask why they have to put up with women when the latter cannot even do their one important job decently.

However that may be, cloning, which is essentially a form of "virgin birth" or parthenogenesis, is an old trick by now; the new trick is to figure out how to customize, micromanage, and engineer the DNA package itself. "Growing" DNA in millions of cells at once and scanning them for the genetic characteristics (genotype) you seek is orders of magnitude quicker than breeding entire animals (phenotype). *New Scientist* notes that, at the cellular level, "much rarer and more subtle . . . manipulation can be accomplished, such as replacing one gene for another, or changing a single DNA letter of a gene."

One more precise technique is "gene splicing" or recombinant DNA. Thousands of "restriction" enzymes exist, each of which "recognizes" a single nucleotide sequence; these enzymes function like scissors, snipping the A-C-G-T base pairs and unraveling the double helix so that other gene sequences can be inserted. Afterward, the chain is repaired with the enzyme ligase. Either a new creature can result, or the altered cell can be used as a factory to mass-produce substances such as insulin.

The most common and blatant characteristic currently selected for, of course, is "gender," once known as *sex*. In nature, male births run slightly higher than female, a mysterious phenomenon that compensates for the universally higher mortality rates among male infants, boys, and men. The proportion of male to female *conceptions* is even higher, since males account for the majority of stillbirths, perhaps because the mother's body is more prone to attack male tissue as "alien" *in utero*.

Once humans engage in sex selection, this compensating balance rapidly collapses. In the West, experience already suggests that the preferred sex will be female. Western societies so heavily reward and reinforce feminine behaviors such as risk-aversion, docility, cooperation, sedentariness, verbalism, passive aggression, orientation toward "personalities" and "feelings," tolerance for busywork (and did I mention *need to shop*?) that parents choosing which embryo(s) to retain during fertility treatment opt more often for girls.

Why wouldn't they? No caring parent wants to give his child a tough row to hoe in life. Besides, as feminists like to sneer, who wants to inflict more testosterone poisoning on our unquiet world? As feminists see it, men are forever making messes, and women are forever having to clean them up. That's history for you: one damn mess after another. Ritalin and Adderall and other ADHD medications counteract the ill effects of testosterone, yet surely a more permanent solution is in order.

Giving birth to a son, in some circles, is rather like miscegenation in the Old South: It happens, but Lord knows it's nothing to be proud of. Some women who have had or know they will be having boys actually write agonized little apologias in trendy journals to the girlfriends whom they have "betrayed" by such a grievous lapse of political correctness. (A moment of silence here for their unfortunate sons.)

In the rest of the world, though, it is daughters for whom we need to pray. Up until recently in such societies as China, India, and Bangladesh, the ancient art of exposure was widely practiced. Then ultrasound and chorionic villus sampling (CVS) became available, which make child's play of eliminating unwanted baby girls. China's ratio of male-to-female births is completely out of whack now, and India's is also unbalanced.

Girls are considered a burden throughout the Third World. Particularly where families are permitted no more than one child, as in China, the traditional cus-

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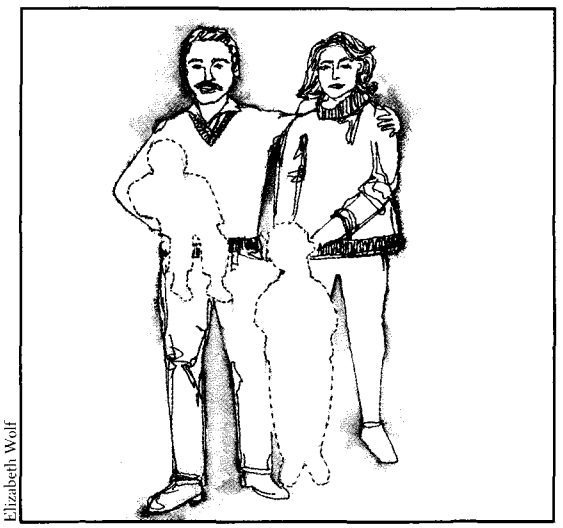
tom of sons caring for their parents in old age while daughters are "lost" (becoming the caretakers of their husbands' parents) makes having a son an absolute necessity. Unfortunately, dear old Mom and Dad forgot to worry about whom Junior was supposed to marry when he grew up.

In Muslim lands, girls are not as discouraged, because polygamy can absorb the extras. But polygamy also means a lot of young men are price-squeezed out of the marriage market, an oversight that feeds not only the vein-bulging passion for *jihad* but the pressure to trek elsewhere in search of a mate.

Thus, the combination of polygamy and excess male births in the Third World is building an enormous wave of unattached young males, a wave that is already breaking on the shores of the feminized Old and New Worlds. This particular "clash of civilizations"—more like a shotgun marriage of civilizations—will make the Rape of the Sabine Women look like a middle-school dance. It may well change the face of the world's races the old-fashioned way, much more emphatically than all the *in vitro* techniques put together.

Speaking of racial transformation, the Human Genome Project (HGP), having mapped at least a pretty good impression of the human species' 2.9 billion nucleotide sequences, has begun searching for racial markers among the fewer than one percent of nucleotides whose locations seem to differ from one race to another. The HGP's motive is noble—to tailor drug treatments more effectively to individuals based on their genes—but its new search has the usual crybabies blubbering that "genetic explanations might obscure the all-too-real social and economic causes" of various embarrassing racial differences such as criminality, IQ, and parenting style. (See "The Genome in Black and White [and Gray]," by Robin Marantz Henig, *New York Times Magazine*, October 10, 2004.)



Elizabeth Wolf

Any discovery of biological differences between races, whine the censors, will be used to stigmatize people and let White Racist Society off the hook. Besides, race is a myth, "a cultural construct without any biological significance," Henig muses:

> Looking for racial genetic markers does indeed risk creating categories that can get us in trouble. . . . Could it be that this terrain is too dangerous to let anyone, no matter how well meaning, try to navigate it?

Henig apparently finds it quite palatable to shut down entire domains of scientific inquiry, lest some "pernicious," "loathsome" truth be stumbled upon. Yet, if social and economic causes are "all too real," why have they never been able to explain away what the Race-Is-Mythical crowd wants them to explain away?

The aspect of the HGP's quest that piques my interest here is that, if drugs and genes are being taught to read and amend the genetic code, race itself might also be erased, "overcome," by genetic therapy. Race has been such an unhappy motif in the human comedy; if anything is to be abolished, let it be race.

If there turn out to be genes for homosexuality, how long will it be before homosexual couples start designing their own "gay" offspring, giving a whole new meaning to interior decorating? Those who worry about the thousands of young children who have already been adopted by homosexuals—a fast-approaching scandal whose dimensions are going to dwarf those of priestly pedophilia—will have even less power to protect the victims of such private decisions to take advantage of "reprogenetics."

At least five children have already been born in the United States to serve as stem-cell donors for older siblings suffering from genetic disorders. They began life as embryos subjected to "preimplantation genetic diagnosis" to test for tissue compatibility. *New Scientist* reports (May 2004) that "stem cells from the child's umbilical cord are used. If an existing sibling were a tissue-match, they would have to have cells taken from their bone marrow." There is no benefit to the donor embryo, but there is risk. From this step, how far is it really to the creation of clones solely for tissue and organ harvesting?

The possibilities of biotechnology are almost unimaginable. Five things, however, are sure: First, whatever can be done will be done before it is over. Second, a *lot* more has already been done than has been acknowledged. Third, most of the information gathered on individuals' DNA will be used to terminate the preborn and to deny rights and opportunities to the born (education, jobs, insurance, reproduction, *etc.*). Fourth, folks who jump in to choose the sex, height, complexion, hair and eye color, intelligence, and other traits of their offspring will be accused of "unabashed expressions of sexism and racism." In fact, they already have been, by one Jonathan M. Berkowitz.

And fifth, much less attention will be paid to eugenics, in the end, than to personal, individual immortality. Given a choice between improving the species and living forever, man cannot resist the latter. He will clone himself over and over, until the chromosomes lose their code, and death its sting, and the salt of the earth its savor.

Marian Kester Coombs writes from Crofton, Maryland.

Has America Lost Her Moral Gag Reflex?

by B.K. Eakman

Since 1935, a branch of psychiatry specializing in hereditary illnesses and abnormalities known as "behavioral eugenics" has been warning of rampant mental illness. Dr. Franz J. Kallmann, who came to America in the mid-1930's after having served under Ernst Rüdin, head of Hitler's "racial hygiene" program, argued in favor of "psychiatric genetics" even after he arrived on American shores to escape the Third Reich's henchmen. He claimed that, if something were not done soon, schizophrenics would outnumber normal individuals. He and several like-minded colleagues advised

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initiating a screening program to "counsel against" reproductive rights for those showing evidence of, or suspected of being at future risk of, *any form* of mental illness.

What is and is not symptomatic of "mental illness" is open to interpretation. According to Dr. Kallmann, for example, schizophrenics included "daydreamers, cranks, being cold-hearted or unsociable, persons showing sudden urges in temperament, emotional inadequacy, obstinacy, or superstition." In just the past couple of years, however, television has been awash in advertisements for such drugs as Paxil and Zoloft, marketed for "social inadequacy," a term eerily reminiscent of Kallmann's terminology. Like most categories of mental afflictions listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), the ever-expanding bible of the psychiatric profession, such symptoms are highly subjective.

Despite his outlandish pronouncements, accolades surrounded Kallmann in this country, even in such prestigious publications as the *New York Times*. As Nazi atrocities increasingly came to light after the war, however, wiser heads prevailed. Both "psychiatric genetics" and mass screening were quietly shelved until the 1960's and early 70's, when Kenneth Boulding, Carl Bajema, and Linda Erlenmeyer-Kimling (Kallmann's protégé and a former president of the American Eugenics Society), among others, brought it up again.

By 1971, the American Eugenics Society (AES) had exchanged its name for the less-intimidating Society for the Study of Social Biology, and its flagship publication, *Eugenics Quarterly*, had adopted a new title, *Social Biology*. Erlenmeyer-Kimling secured large grants, mainly from the National Institute for Mental Health, to pursue her contention that certain "bio-behavioral markers" in "psychiatrically normal children" could be used to predict mental illness. She devised tests that could be used to identify youngsters supposedly predisposed to passing on aberrant traits, with a view to intervention and "counseling." She secured some ten million dollars over the years to continue what was essentially the mission of the old AES: to launch "a program of negative genetics" by controlling who "should and should not have children."

The same year, Carl Bajema, secretary of the old AES, proposed that couples be given a preliminary license to have exactly two children. He assumed that not everyone would want that many children anyway, and those who did could apply for a waiver based on "proof of genetic superiority" in the arts, mental ability, personality, athletics, or business. (How one might "prove" superiority in personality remains a mystery.) Referring to Bajema's waiver concept, Kenneth Boulding lauded *Roe* v. *Wade*, writing in the Spring 1975 issue of *Social Biology* that it "makes the problem of enforcement much easier . . . since abortion provides a mechanism for prior elimination of many potential unlicensed babies." However, he cautioned that, while Bajema's waiver might make for "a marketable licensing system," "the political acceptability of this compromise proposal is more questionable than that of a . . . system that does not attempt *explicit* eugenic control" (emphasis mine). He went on to propose the development of a mandatory, long-standing contraceptive implant that all females must accept at puberty. "[T]he reversal of the implant's sterilizing effect would be obtainable upon surrendering of a childbearing license," Boulding wrote.

Remember, this is coming from specialists in the United States for use on her own citizens, not from the Soviet Union, Germany, or China.

In 1972, Erlenmeyer-Kimling stated that "attending to the long-term quality of the gene pool was a long-term necessity," and she decided that "society is more likely to tolerate an emphasis on a eugenic attitude that preserves the status quo of the gene pool or prevents it from deteriorating." In other words, she thought that the American public would be more apt to buy into eugenics if it did not actually have to kill anybody but, rather, merely keep the nonconformists and oddballs from having children.

"Who's minding the quality of the gene pool?" Erlenmeyer-Kimling asked.

> The essence of evolution is natural selection; the essence of eugenics is the replacement of "natural" selection by conscious, premeditated, or artificial selection in the hope of speeding up the evolution of "desirable" characteristics and the elimination of "undesirable" ones.

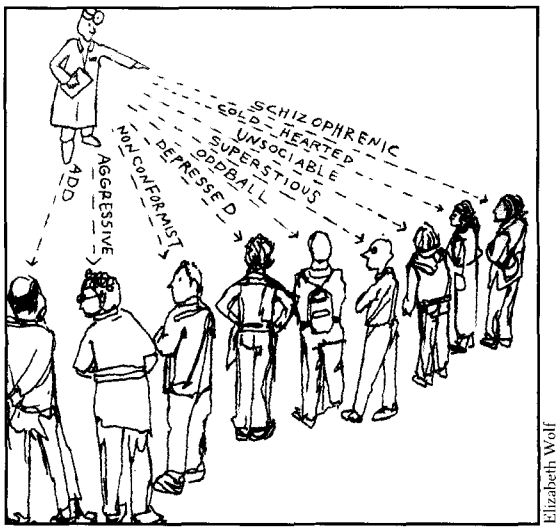
To that end, she urged abandoning the "fixation on IQ as the trait to be maximized in our species in favor of an Index of Social Value (or ISV)," never stopping to consider, apparently, the short leap from "desirable characteristics" to "desirable opinions." Given the hasty escape of her mentor, Franz Kallmann, from Nazi clutches, she should have known better.

In any case, Erlenmeyer-Kimling concentrated on attention-deficit disorder as the primary predictor of mental illness. Clarke J. Kestenbaum, describing Erlenmeyer-Kimling's work in the *American Handbook of Psychiatry*, wrote in 1981 that "the children with early [attention-related] deficits . . . become increasingly deviant behaviorally as they get older [which] supports the hypothesis that attentional dysfunctions serve as early predictors of later pathology." He concurred that "early intervention should include genetic counseling."

Moreover, "negative eugenics" efforts continued under the umbrellas of population control, childcare, and mental health.

The timing of public statements to that effect still was not right in the 1970's and 80's. The emergence of the civil-rights movement meant that the notion of government controlling who should have children on such bases as "social handicap" or "deviance in thought" smacked too much of racial prejudice. Indeed, at the heart of the eugenics movement is the notion of black inferiority and criminality (*i.e.*, "race-specific lifetime . . . rates of delinquency [and] unwed motherhood"), which, in turn, is based on something called "bad gene" theory. Sheldon Segal, former director both of the Population Council and the old AES, and Erlenmeyer-Kimling were among those calling loudest for "control" of "black fertility."

The idea was deferred again.



Elizabeth Wolf

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The prominence during the 1990's of such so-called mental-health issues as depression, road rage, school violence, high illegitimacy rates, child sex abuse, and postpartum suicides/murders had, by the year 2000, resulted in aggressive scrutiny of parents, not only by child protective service agencies but by university mental-health researchers marketing new psychiatric-screening instruments to school districts. These instruments increasingly found their way into the classroom, sometimes in conjunction with standardized academic tests, other times as stand-alone questionnaires disguised as health surveys and opinion polls. While some parents balked, most caved in, finding little or no support for their grievances either in their school districts or from the education establishment and fearing, correctly, that failure to acquiesce would blight their children's records. Today, the controversial parent component of the New Freedom Initiative on Mental Health—a nationwide project to screen the entire U.S. population for mental illness and provide a cradle-to-grave continuum of quasimandatory therapeutic "services" for those identified as mentally ill *or even at risk of becoming so*—has added to these fears.

The latter legislative atrocity, which I reported on at length in *Chronicles* ("What? Are You Crazy?" *Vital Signs*, October 2004), makes the school the hub of a mass-screening process. (Other authors, such as Dr. Dennis L. Cuddy and Paul Walter on *NewsWithViews.com* and Dr. Karen Effrem of Minnesota's EDWATCH, have discussed this legislation as well.) Assessment of parents and pregnant women is integral to the plan. Similar pieces of legislation, such as Illinois's "Children's Mental Health Plan/Partnership" and Pennsylvania's "Ounce of Prevention," have passed in various states, so that, when it comes time to implement the nationwide directive, most of the country will already be on board.

Now, two frightening documents have surfaced. The first articulates a convincing rationale by established psychologists and psychiatrists for resurrecting the concept of parent licensing. A November/December 1996 issue of the social-science journal *Society* is suddenly making the rounds—not only among professionals but in Congress. The issue covers a symposium on parent licensing that took place earlier that year. The gist of the proceedings was that increased psychopathy and sociopathy, along with accompanying crime waves, could be vastly reduced if parents were screened for markers of mental illness and counseled against, *even prevented from*, having children. Licensure would carry with it "sanctions," according to several contributors, such as Robert A. Gordon, sociology professor at Johns Hopkins University and a fellow of the American Psychological Association.

Sanctions, of course, entail the force of law.

Another notable contributor, child psychiatrist Jack C. Westman, M.D. (author of *Licensing Parents: Can We Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect?*), estimated that each sociopath costs society about three million dollars over the course of his lifetime. He called for a long-term solution to require would-be parents to "meet the kind of requirements that one expects of prospective adoptive parents." He suggested that parent licensing "be handled through the channels of marriage licensing, prenatal care, and birth registration since it essentially would be a question of credentialing." He further endorsed "parent competency testing," describing it as "large-scale testing for signs of parental incompetence . . . to predict the parenting potential of pregnant women."

A distinction should be made between people who are brain-injured, severely retarded, or otherwise unmistakably brain-damaged and those who are "mentally ill." In the latter category, there exists no blood test, X-ray, or other examination that can prove a person is of unsound mind. That has left the field wide open to charlatans with ulterior motives for categorizing individuals as "crazy." Indeed, the insanity defense has been criticized for years on the grounds that it is subjective and predisposed to deliberate misinterpretation.

Although Westman admitted that large-scale screening was not feasible in 1996, he defended the principle: "A parent license," he wrote, "would validate parental rights and focus public policies on supporting competent parenting and on remedying or replacing incompetent parenting." Westman, however, does not appear to place much stock in "remedying."

"We cannot rely upon every irresponsible person becoming responsible through persuasion, education, or treatment," Westman writes. He cites "the case with habitual criminals, [who] do not respond to education or persuasion." Yet, it has been an article of liberal faith since the 1960's that education, not punishment, is the answer to criminality. Is this liberal ideology, mere hypocrisy, or something more frightening?

On October 4, 2004, another staggering pronouncement from the mental-health community was made at a Texas Committee hearing on Psychotropic Drugs and Foster Care Children. Even some politically liberal human-rights advocates were stunned when psychiatrist Joe Burkett informed the committee, which was investigating allegations of mass drugging of children in foster care, that one of the main reasons so many foster kids need to be on psychotropic drugs is that they are from a bad gene pool. Another psychiatrist, Dr. John Sargent, professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at the Baylor College of Medicine and former dean of the Karl Menninger School of Psychiatry and Mental Health Sciences, reiterated the "bad gene" claim, insisting that aggressive psychiatric care is imperative.

At about the same time (October 9-13, 2004), the 12th World Congress on Psychiatric Genetics was held in Dublin, Ireland. It featured world-renowned speakers and educational workshops, sponsored in large part by drug-manufacturing companies with a major interest in psychiatric pharmaceuticals. But there was a surprise from the Institute of German Genetics of Bonn, Germany. In its paper, the Institute backed away from conventional wisdom by stating:

> Whereas complex traits in other fields of medicine are being successfully pinned down to the molecular level, psychiatric genetics still awaits a major breakthrough. It has to be analyzed why mental disorders are obviously harder to tackle.

So, while neurobiological and neuropsychiatric research, including drug treatment, continues unabated, it appears that the field of predictive psychiatry has a long way to go.

Which leaves us exactly where? Back

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in the 1930's, with politicized psychiatry.

Author Tom Clancy brought the debate into focus in his 2003 work, *Sea of Fire*, by having his protagonist wonder aloud how a government can possibly stop somebody from, say, contaminating the money supply with botulism *via* an ATM machine or bringing water laced with acid onto a jetliner; he wonders whether such acts can be prevented by screening for potential psychopaths and sociopaths before they can act—indeed, before they are even born. The character's counterpart in the story speculates that such an effort on a massive scale might trigger a "moral gag reflex" in the public at large.

The goal of parent licensing, Westman insists, is noble: It would acknowledge—by government fiat, if necessary—the United Nations tenet that "all persons, including children, should be free from abuse, oppression, and rejection." Westman assures us that only "a small percentage of parents would not qualify."

Many of his colleagues go further, however, arguing that "society must move beyond the notion that children are the property of their biological parents."

Eugenics has come full circle, from seeking to eliminate the feebleminded, the criminally inclined, alcoholics, and schizophrenics to purging the more modern rejects—the hyperactive, the attention-challenged, the substance abuser, and a variety of so-called learning disabled—through "pro-active," "reproductive counseling" in birth control, abortion, and sterilization.

Proponents of parent licensing such as David Lykken (whose 1995 book, *The Antisocial Personalities*, focuses on the biological susceptibility to sociopathy) admit a racial bias in the scheme to license parents in the 21st century. This, according to both Lykken and Gordon, is largely because of the high incidence of single parenthood (illegitimacy) among the black population. Lykken views single mothering as *the* primary exacerbating circumstance leading to full-blown sociopathy, which, he says, accounts for much of the difference in the crime rate between blacks and whites.

Most traditionalists would agree that illegitimacy has negative consequences for children, but Lykken's analysis is misleading. The increase of single parenthood over the past 30 years has indeed made parent licensing an easier sell, but it is not an entirely natural development: society has positively condoned illegitimacy by removing the social stigma. Single blacks are a particularly easy target because their lower socioeconomic status makes them less able to fight parent licensing. Once the effort to target blacks for "parent malpractice" becomes pervasive, however, a backlash will occur among African-Americans who have made their way into the professional ranks and joined the upper-middle class. Once this outcry begins, the entire population will be caught up in the licensing web to avoid the taint of race. "Risk factors" will inevitably take on a political dimension, threatening freedom of thought.

Professor Gordon demonstrates experts' awareness of this eventuality when he cautions his colleagues against overzealousness, correctly citing examples such as the

> Wenatchee (Washington State) and other harebrained prosecutions of parents or childcare workers for concocted allegations of child abuse, in which supposed experts and other professionals have brought the very concept of expertise into disrepute.

"One must," he writes, "approach child protection as the goal of intervention with extreme caution," lest it come under fire for being politically motivated:

> Conservatives, recall, are already up in arms over sex education in schools, school questionnaires about home activities that ask about the contents of medicine cabinets, and other intrusions into family privacy that they have come to recognize, not without ample justification, as expanding beyond their original supposed intent.

With that statement, Gordon unwittingly nails the argument against parent licensing, whether he agrees with the conservative position or not. His observations above tell us, first, that school testing firms (staffed by behavioral psychologists) have always known full well that "test" questions and follow-up curricula significantly intrude into students' beliefs, contrary to their public statements otherwise, and, second, that these "educators" always knew they were on thin legal ice.

Like Drs. Kallmann, Erlenmeyer-Kimling, Boulding, Lykken, Allen, Wender, and Westman, dozens of eugenicists still hold on, expressly or not, to the bold notion, first iterated by the serpent in Genesis, "Ye shall be as gods." According to G.P. Smith,

> Genetic planning and eugenic programming are more rational and humane alternatives to population regulation than death by famine and war. Genetic enhancement technologies and the scientific research undertaken to advance them should be viewed as . . . a tool for enhancing the health of a Nation's citizens by engineering man's genetic weaknesses out of the line of inheritance.

Such arrogance, coming down simultaneously with the new mass-mental-health-screening legislation euphemistically called the New Freedom Initiative, should activate Americans' "moral gag reflex" if, indeed, anything, at this point, can do so.

B.K. Eakman, a former teacher, is executive director of the National Education Consortium, a columnist, and the author of two best-selling books on education policy.

LIBERALISM

Innocent Leftists

by James Moses

A recent film festival sponsored by Human Rights Watch at New York's Walter Reade Theater in Lincoln Center attracted the hard-core sandalistas of the Upper West Side, who filed in to watch—what else?—the Sandinistas and Contras in a cartoon of a Canadian documentary called *The World Stopped Watching*. The accompanying flyer asked, "What happens to a country's people when the media spotlight is turned off?"

Answer: Two American journalists who went to Managua, and into the hills in the 1980's, have seen Nicaragua's post-Ortega republic and find it sorely lacking. For starters, as the voice-over ominously intones, "11 of the 94 members of Nicaragua's National Assembly are former Contra military commanders." Obviously, somebody had better do a little affirmative-actioning to boost the per-

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centage of non-Contras above the 88-percent mark.

Throughout the film, a former *Newsweek* photographer and a *Boston Globe* reporter, who had been fired by that publication for "lack of objectivity" (the mind boggles!), are eager to revisit alleged Contra massacre sites but never even broach the subject of Sandinista repression of, say, the Miskito Indians of the Atlantic coast. Similarly, scenes from the archives of cheering mobs defying the Norteamericano Reagan administration in the main plaza of the capital are interspersed with a pick-up baseball game being played on the same spot in the late 90's.

Raucous leftism, good. Normality, bad.

Speaking of Reagan, maybe the audience was a bit lethargic that day, but the deceased 40th president appeared on camera twice and escaped unjeered. How quaint.

The program led off with a trip back to the bad old 70's—specifically, the South America of the 1970's. A documentary, first shown on French television, was the other part of the double bill: *Death Squads: The French School*, which purported to tell the story of French army officers, schooled in counterrevolutionary warfare in Indochina and Algeria, teaching interrogation techniques to Argentines, Brazilians, and Chileans as well as Americans at Fort Bragg beginning in the early 1960's. A parade of villain-torturers is marched across the screen and, in many cases, interviewed: Gen. Paul Aussaresses, the eye-patched octogenarian who created a scandal by claiming in a book that Fourth Republic politicians, including François Mitterand, authorized his forces to use torture during the Battle of Algiers; assorted OAS militants; Manuel Contreras, chief of Pinochet's DINA; and, of course, *junta* leaders Pinochet and Videla themselves.

So, maybe the defenders of civilization against the Bolsheviks played rough and bent the rules. (And maybe Pinochet used his position to squirrel away millions of dollars into a personal account at the Riggs Bank of Washington, D.C.) Point taken. But where was the accompanying feature-length documentary (or even two-minute intro), "Death Squads: The School of the Montoneros," which could have recounted the countless executions of businessmen and officers, the daily bombings and kidnappings perpetrated by the revolutionary left in Argentina? The *Wall Street Journal* recently ran an article that discussed the work of Argentine political commentator Vicente Massot:

> In his book "Matar o Morir" ("To Kill or To Die"), published in 2003, [he] finds that from May 1973 to March 1976, when the military deposed Isabel Peron, there were 5,079 terrorist attacks. Mr. Massot puts the body count in that period over 400, including almost 100 civilians and union leaders, dozens of policemen, and hundreds of military officers.

To the left, military repression always occurred in a vacuum. Their side never did anything to provoke. Just witness the recent flap over the French government's decision, at long last, to extradite to Italy a member of the Armed Proletarians for Communism, Cesare Battisti, who murdered four people 25 years ago. *Libération* and a coterie of ex-Mitterand government officials, as well as the openly homosexual Socialist mayor of Paris, in a supreme example of radical chic, have all chimed in to preserve this rat's "right of asylum." Of course, they would be the first to call for Pinochet's extradition to Spain, or to anywhere else in the world, wouldn't they?

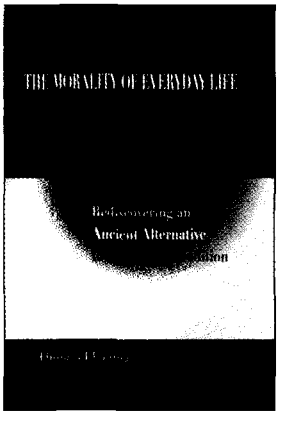
James Moses writes from New York City.

The Morality of Everyday Life:
Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition

by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.



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by George McCartney

Fly Boy

From the late 1920's to the late 1950's, Howard Hughes seemed to own the world. Backed by the wealth of his father's patented oil-drill business, he moved from Houston to Los Angeles in 1925 at age 20 to indulge his two passions: aviation and movies. There, he became an upstart filmmaker who broke Hollywood's rules, producing films that exceeded normal budgets ten-times over and successfully flouting the censors with projects such as *Scarface* (1932) and *The Outlaw* (1943). At the same time, he was a champion pilot who broke speed records flying cross-country in 1936 and 1937 and then around-the-world in 1938. The public was abuzz with his accomplishments and pruriently intrigued by rumors that he enjoyed the favors of a floating harem of stars and starlets. By the late 40's, however, Hughes began to succumb to a weird congeries of phobias and obsessions, exacerbated by a massive addiction to codeine and Valium. As time went on, he increasingly isolated himself from the world behind a phalanx of creepy retainers who catered to his every childish whim, no matter how bizarre, unlawful, or depraved. At his command, this palace guard sealed his rooms with masking tape to fend off imagined bacterial assaults, bottled his urine and stored it in a closet, supplied him with limitless drugs, solicited teenage girls for his occasional pleasure, and much more. In the end, he was reduced to a 90-pound, six-foot-one wraith scribbling screeds of insanely detailed directions to his underlings on such matters as how to hang his clothing, squeeze his orange juice, and lift his toilet seat. Like Joseph Conrad's Mr. Kurtz lost in the Congo, Hughes lost his way traveling between his lairs in the fantastical worlds of Hollywood and Las Vegas. As the jungle had "whispered" to Kurtz, so America's vulgar, glittering wilderness had whispered to Hughes, telling him "things about himself which he did not know." As with Kurtz, "the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating. It echoed loudly within him because he was hollow at the core."

Many have claimed to understand the obsessive, narcissistic Hughes, but Alfred Hitchcock—no stranger to obsession himself—got there first with a stroke of comic relief in *Vertigo* (1958), his otherwise somber meditation on romantic delusion. In the film's second scene, an ex-detective named Scottie (Jimmy Stewart) visits his friend Midge (Barbara Bel Geddes), a freelance artist. He is mildly startled to see a feminine undergarment positioned next to her studio drawing table. "What's this do-hickey, here?" he inquires. "It's a brassiere," she answers with amusement. "You know about those things. You're a big boy, now. It's brand new. Revolutionary uplift. No shoulder straps, no back straps, but does everything a brassiere should do. It works on the principle of the cantilever bridge. An aircraft engineer down the peninsula designed it. He worked it out in his spare time."

The unnamed engineer is, of course, Howard Hughes, who famously took time from designing flying machines to construct a high-tech brassiere for his protégé Jane Russell. He wanted to display her twin charms as prominently as possible in *The Outlaw*. This was the film, he promised his public with boyish drollery, that was going to "knock both your eyes out."

Besides making fun of Hughes, Hitchcock's brassiere scene advances *Vertigo*'s theme: the risks implicit in the way women collude with male sexual obsession, molding themselves physically and emotionally to satisfy men's romantic fantasies. Hitchcock shared such an obsession with Hughes, but, unlike the unreflective Texan, he understood it for what it was: an adolescent fixation that, indulged uncritically, inevitably led to disillusionment. Hughes' need to improve Russell's bosom, however, was symptomatic of more than this. It was of a piece with his compulsion to control everything and everyone around him. Seemingly incapable of irony, Hughes couldn't put his obsession into perspective. It may have been an early manifestation of what seems to have been a mental illness that eventually took over his life.

Martin Scorsese has cleverly smuggled Midge's drawing into *The Aviator*, his sweeping, astonishing, but incomplete rendering of Hughes' life. It's 1941, and

The Aviator

Produced by Warner Bros. and Miramax Films
Directed by Martin Scorsese
Screenplay by John Logan
Distributed by Warner Bros.

Hughes (Leonardo DiCaprio) has been dividing his time, as he so often did, between designing airplanes and "acquiring" starlets for his movies. At a meeting with his engineers, he holds up a drafting pad filled with drawings, all but one of them of airplane parts. The exception is a rendering of a woman in a strapless brassiere, an exact copy of the drawing Bel Geddes would show Stewart 17 years later in *Vertigo*. This cinematic anachronism is an inside joke that will amuse only a small portion of the audience. Nevertheless, you don't have to get the connection to get the point. By combining the mechanical with the human drawing, Scorsese and scriptwriter John Logan visually indicate Hughes' arrested psychological development. He approached people in the same utilitarian manner as he did machinery, with this difference: He was more comfortable with compliant machines than with willful human beings, especially women.

Scorsese repeatedly underscores Hughes' obsessive need to control his environment, the better to insulate himself from its supposed dangers. We first see Hughes in 1910, at five years old, being warned by his mother that he is not safe. He must defend himself against all manner of infections. This, we are to understand, is the beginning of his lifelong mission to erect barriers between himself and germs. In the next scene, we jump seven years ahead, and Hughes is directing his fourth film, *Hell's Angels*,

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which features World War I air combat. He is disappointed with the rushes. On screen, the planes seem unaccountably sluggish. Suddenly, he realizes what's wrong. There is nothing stationary in the frame to give a sense of their speed. The planes are flying in a cloudless California sky over an empty desert. He needs, in his words, "clouds like huge breasts swollen with milk." (Hughes' breast fixation surely forecast his final infantilization.) When he finally finds his clouds over Oakland, he insists on reshooting the aerial footage. This sequence is an exhilarating montage of aerobatic grandeur aloft and comical mania below. The one still point is a curious close-up shot of the back of DiCaprio's head as he sits hieratically in a director's chair, looming motionlessly over the frenetic panorama. It is an image that recurs at key moments to suggest Hughes' need to exert a god-like dominance over all he surveys. Later, after some reverses and several soured love affairs, his will to dominate turns ugly. We watch him from behind once more, sitting as if on a throne in a darkened sound stage, awaiting the arrival of the 15-year-old would-be actress Faith Domergue. When she shows up, he hires her ostensibly to be his next star—but, in fact, to be his occasional mistress, as he obliquely but unmistakably makes plain to the girl. Gone are the sunlit antics of aerial choreography. Here we have the dark will of a control freak. Frustrated that adult women such as Katherine Hepburn and Ava Gardner would not submit to him completely, Hughes made a habit of exploiting compliant girls, always careful to have them sign a legal "agreement" first.

In filming Hughes' life, Scorsese has attempted to make his own *Citizen Kane*. In some shots, DiCaprio has clearly been made to resemble Orson Welles, with his manly mustache contrasting mischievously with his baby face. That Scorsese nearly succeeds in his *Kane* ambition testifies to his skills and his vision. As an entertainer, he has never been better. At almost three hours, his film never once bogs down. It is a series of miraculously gorgeous scenes seamlessly sewn together, each fulfilling its own distinctive purpose. When Scorsese wants to show Hughes being sucked into the vortex of celebrity, he has DiCaprio walk a red carpet into the opening of *Hell's Angels* with its star, Jean Harlow, on his arm. A cadre of cameramen descend on the couple, their flashbulbs going off like an endless volley of fiery pistol shots. The ejected bulbs litter the carpet with shards of glittering glass over which Hughes, rendered nearly sightless by the flashes, must gingerly pick his way. This is fame, a blinding gauntlet threatening laceration at every step.

Another scene illuminates Hughes' reckless pride. It relates an incident worthy of fiction, and Scorsese has made the most of it. Against the judgment of his engineers, Hughes insisted on flying his experimental reconnaissance plane, the XF-11, in 1946. From the start, there was trouble. Once in the air, he could not retract the landing wheels. His repeated attempts to do so caused him to lose control of the plane. He crashed into the suburban rooftops of Beverly Hills, the neighborhood of many of his film industry enemies, including Louis B. Mayer. As the plane's wing slices through several elegant Spanish-style houses, uproariously scattering their tiles and grinding their stucco into dust, you cannot help thinking this was something more than an accident. Hughes should have returned to the airfield as soon as he detected the landing gear failure. Instead, he continued flying, later explaining he wanted to analyze and fix the problem. That he made the attempt over Beverly Hills seems telling. Did Hughes have a death wish, a longing for both suicide and revenge? As it was, he almost killed himself and badly frightened Beverly Hills homeowners.

The Aviator is a hugely enjoyable film, but it does not have the impact of *Citizen Kane*. Orson Welles and his screenwriter, Herman Mankiewicz, fictionalized their subject, William Randolph Hearst, and that gave them leave to shape their story as a caustic parable of American materialism. Scorsese, on the other hand, has chosen—at least nominally—to stick to fact, thereby denying himself the plastic resources of fiction. Yet, at the same time, he has edited his account severely, attempting to make Hughes a tragic hero. This will not wash. If Hughes suffered from mental illness—and there seems little doubt that he did, probably from his earliest years—he cannot be judged wholly responsible for his fate and is therefore not tragic in the classical sense. Awkward with people, obsessed with cleanliness, trapped in repetitive routines (steak with exactly 12 peas was his invariable dinner), given to repeating himself endlessly, he seems to have suffered from Asperger's Syndrome, a condition similar to milder forms of autism that is said to have afflicted a number of highly accomplished individuals, among them Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jascha Heifetz, and Bobby Fischer. Whatever it was, it left Hughes a pathetic infant, squalling to have his way over the most trivial personal matters as his empire was slowly taken away from him. This is not a tragedy; it is a case study.

With a few exceptions, the film's acting is vibrant and convincing. DiCaprio makes Hughes at once engaging and opaque, a man infinitely more at ease with planes than with the many women whom he is supposed to have bedded. (There are some who have plausibly speculated that Hughes was not the lover he pretended and that his many relationships were more calculatingly decorative than passionately erotic.) Cate Blanchett almost makes us forget she looks nothing like Katherine Hepburn, one of Hughes' more distinguished mistresses. With a staccato, angular energy, she virtually channels Hepburn's eccentricities. Kate Beckinsale is less successful as Ava Gardner, another questionable dalliance. She is beautiful but simply does not have the smoldering gaze Gardner put to such good use. Alan Alda is superlative as Sen. Owen Brewster of Maine, cat's-paw for Pan Am in its struggle to hobble Hughes' airline, TWA. I cannot think of a more credible portrait of an unprincipled political chameleon, sycophantically wheedling one moment and pompously bullying the next.

All in all, *Aviator* is a film to see and, just perhaps, see again.

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Villas of New Mexico

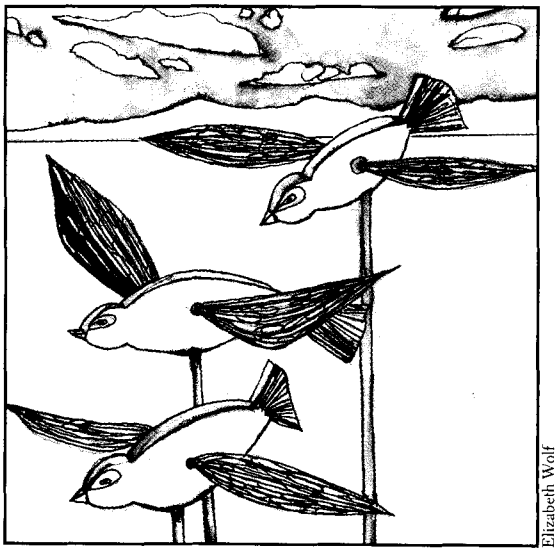
"Hey, *compadrito*—bring the mail along with you when you come inside!" Héctor Villa shouted through the open window to Jesús Juárez, his friend, who was just letting himself into the yard by the front gate where the mailbox, painted red-white-and-blue, stood on a barbershop post.

Héctor "Pancho" Villa was having a pleasant Saturday morning in June, sitting late at the kitchen table over his morning coffee while his wife, AveMaria, weeded the garden patch behind the house and their daughter, Contracepción, minded Dubya, the baby, named for Héctor's greatest hero after the late Francisco Villa, Centaur of the North. (As Héctor and AveMaria had agreed that the little boy would be their last child, Héctor thought it particularly important that he should bear the name of a great man and a patriot.) Master of all he surveyed (if he didn't lift his chin too high toward the Manzano Mountains east of Belen, or glance too far to the rather prim and, to his mind, sterile houses left or right), he felt satisfied and assured, altogether pleased with himself as his sight caressed the artistic assemblage of art objects arranged before him on the front lawn: the miniature drill rig painted orange, yellow, and purple; the windmill nearly as tall as the house itself that drew water upward from a tank buried in the ground beneath it; the wooden birds—bright-painted, eagle-sized, and mounted on poles—endlessly flailing backward on wings rotated by the unceasing high-desert wind; the tall clay ovens shaped like broad-bottomed giraffes without heads, tastefully placed by AveMaria in surprising places where nobody would normally expect to find an oven and that you could actually fry tortillas and roast corn in; the four-, six-, and even eight-foot-tall Trees of Life—ceramic confections, hauled up from Ciudad Chihuahua, in which the serpent, Adam, and Eve were grouped with various saints and animals among spreading arboreal foliage; the Army Jeep that had had its motor pulled and its engine compartment filled with dirt and planted with sunflowers. From inside the house, Hector could not contemplate directly the huge, two-dimensional, rainbow-colored silhouettes of birds, butterflies, and flowers tacked all round the exterior walls, the side facing the street especially; he could, however, imagine them. Past all this splendor, just beyond the turquoise-blue picket fence and the patriotic mailbox, the new-model GMC van, also painted red-white-and-blue and emblazoned with the words PANCHO'S COMPUTER SERVICE, stood parked half on and half off the strip of narrow sidewalk. If only (Héctor mused, leaning on his thick forearms above the coffee cup as he watched Jesús approach the house with a bundle of mail under his arm, dodging statuary as he came) the padre back in Namiquipa years ago, who'd warned him as a boy that he was Hell-bound, could behold him now: fat, dumb, and happy (as they said in America), at his ease in the Promised Land! (He had stopped thinking of the USA as "El Norte" years ago.)

"Hey," Jesús (who was also called "Eddie") greeted him, as he dropped the mail heavily on the table, nearly upsetting Héctor's cup, "so what do you know to-*day*, man?"

Jesús "Eddie" was no Mexican but a Rio Abajo New Mexican, which gave him a rather odd manner of speaking. Also, it made him, in Héctor's eyes, slightly un-American. Rio Abajo folks—like the Rio Arriba ones up north, come to think of it—disliked Americans (whom they called "Anglos") and Mexicans almost equally. Unlike the northern inhabitants of New Mexico, however, who considered themselves superior on account of their supposed direct descent from the Spanish *conquistadores*, the Rio Abajo people south of Albuquerque thought of themselves as *Nuevo Méxicanos*—and more superior still. Though he sometimes resented his air of condescension toward immigrant Mexicans, Héctor was fond of Jesús and enjoyed having him around—so long as he kept his eyes off Contracepción, who had recently turned thirteen and was fast becoming a woman in all the recognizable places. So far as a husband for their daughter went, nothing would do, Héctor and AveMaria were determined, but a patriotic Anglo boy her own age who would agree to being married in one of the evangelical churches. (The Villas themselves happened to belong to the First Assembly of God, which they'd joined after the local Catholic priest had refused to baptize Contracepción under her given name.)

"Not a whole lot, *amigo*. Help yourself to a cup of coffee and a chair." While Jesús "Eddie" drew coffee from the automatic brewer on the countertop, Héctor glanced quickly through his mail, which included a couple of letters from relatives back home in Namiquipa, an official-looking notice of some sort from the City of Belen, a mailing from Hijos de Pancho Villa (an organization of Villas' descendants and others who wished they were) in Parral, and the July Mastercard bill. The relatives would be requesting remittances, and Héctor was sure he could not face the credit-card bill over coffee. He was about to push the pile away from himself when he noticed that the city-hall letter had DATED MATERIAL: OPEN IMMEDIATELY stamped in red on it. Héctor slit it open with his penknife but left the contents inside the envelope for the time being. He'd paid the water and trash bill



Elizabeth Wolf

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only the week before, so he wasn't overly concerned to know why the *alcalde* and his friends should be in such a hurry to get his attention now.

"And you," he asked Jesús "Eddie" as his friend seated himself across the table; "how goes *your* day so far, *hermano*?"

Jesús "Eddie" rolled his eyes toward Heaven. Then he passed his brown hand from his forehead down over his chin. When he had done this, his face wore an entirely different expression.

"It is bad what goes on up in Santa *Fe* these days," he said, darkly. "The goddamn *Anglos*—they want to outlaw cock*fighting* in Soccorro! All the f--king movie stars, the environmentalists, f--king *PETA*—it's cultural *geno*cide, man!"

Héctor nodded, trying to look sympathetic. He'd never been much of an enthusiast for the sport himself, even when he lived in Namiquipa. "I know, I know . . . Well, listen, *compadrito*: We need to educate the gringos, you understand what I'm saying?—get them to accept our culture. They're halfway there already—Jennifer López, salsa, Taco Bell, everyone wanting to speak Spanish to you at the bank, George Dubya's amnesty plan! Pretty soon they won't *have* any culture, except for ours! You just have to be patient, *amigo*."

Jesús "Eddie" shook his head in frustration and struck the table with his fist. "You don't understand! *We* were in New *Mexico* hundreds of years before *they* were, man! Why should we have to make *them* understand *any*thing?"

Héctor pushed back his chair, went over to the cupboard, and returned with a bottle of tequila.

"It's Saturday, *compadrito*. Put some of that in your coffee and see if you don't feel better, right away."

Elizabeth Wolf

Jesús "Eddie" poured a finger of tequila into his cup and stirred the mixture gloomily with the end of the ballpoint pen he carried in his shirt pocket.

"You got a letter there from city *hall*," he observed. "The Anglos have taken over the town *coun*cil. What do you suppose they're bugging you about, man? Probably to tell you *you* can't keep fighting cocks in *your* backyard, either."

"No idea. I don't owe them nothing." Héctor took up the envelope, slid the letter from it carelessly, and unfolded it. The thing had an official look, apparently a summons of some sort. In sudden alarm, he held it out at arm's length and squinted at it. "Let's see, let's see."

"What do the bastards want now?" Jesús "Eddie" demanded suspiciously.

Héctor's roars brought the family running from the yard into the kitchen, where the head of the household stood behind the table with his hands on his hips and glaring ahead of himself like Pancho Villa preparing to order the attack on Agua Prieta in October 1915.

"What has happened, Panchito?" AveMaria cried.

While her husband groped for words and attempted to bring his voice under control, Jesús "Eddie" was covertly admiring Contracepción, who stood just behind her mother holding Dubya in her arms. The girl was definitely good-looking, he thought, though far from being as intelligent as his own niece of about the same age. He'd always suspected her name reflected her parents' lack of trust in her to protect herself without some sort of subtle reminder.

"*¿Panchito?*" AveMaria repeated.

Héctor turned to face her, his moist brown eyes soft and tragic. "The zoning board—my house—an eyesore! A public nuisance!"

AveMaria took a single lurching step backward, put her hands to her face, and took them away again. She threw back her head suddenly and began to wail.

"*¡Ai, mi Madre!* They will come for us and take our house, first. Then, they will deport us—all the way back to Namiquipa again!"

It was no more than a technicality and easily overlooked in the event, Héctor and AveMaria having been strongly discouraged both by the menacing Arab immigrants and the coyote who guided them all from presenting their papers at the border, in the uninhabited desert east of Douglas, Arizona. In fifteen years, no one had thought to trouble them about this detail, while the hospitals and schools they had had to do with had been most understanding—in particular, the state university branch where Héctor had received his degree in computer science.

"They can't deport us, stupid," Héctor told his wife dully. "Contracep and Dubya are citizens of the United States—just as much as the President of the United States, George Dubya Bush, himself!"

"They could change the law," she persisted. "What if that *hacendado* Buchanan was to run again for president, next time?"

But Héctor was no longer listening to her. "Ten days to 'comply with standards,'" he muttered. "The best decorated yard in town and one of the three or four most beautiful homes" (he'd considered having it added to the Parade of Homes tour at Christmastime last year), "and they tell me to comply with 'standards'!" He was angry; more than that, however, he felt deeply wounded in his heart. Nothing he had ever experienced in El Norte had made him feel so unwelcome, so misunderstood, as this, including the time an admiring leftist student at school had mistaken him for a Sandinista.

"What have I been saying to you all morning?" Jesús "Eddie" demanded. "The Anglos have *sto*len New Mexico from us. You should ask yourself, *What would Pancho Villa have done in this situation?* I'll tell you what he would have done, *hermano*: He'd have rounded up a couple hundred of his *villistas* and attacked Los Lunas—just like he did Columbus. *¡Viva Villa!*" Jesús "Eddie" shouted, thrusting his fist in the air.

"*¡Viva Villa!*" Héctor echoed him in a dull voice. He'd never known Jesus "Eddie" to express enthusiasm for the Centaur before.

Now Contracepción was looking at Jesús "Eddie." He looked very handsome, she thought, striking a revolutionary position; even the gray at his temples appealed to her as sexy. Still, he was probably too old for her, and Papá would be certain to have a fit.

"What are you going to do, Héctor?" AveMaria asked, speaking in her normal voice this time.

Héctor had no idea what he was going to do. Therefore, he was silent.

"Why don't you just pay the *alcalde* money?" Contracepción asked. From visiting relatives in Namiquipa for sever-

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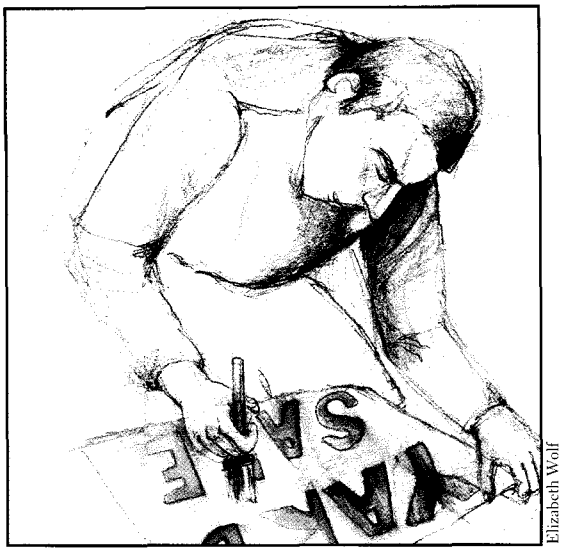
al weeks every summer, she understood a thing or two about how the world works.

"Be silent, Contracepción," her father told her. "It isn't the same up here as there. You think George Dubya gets paid to do, or not do, what he *should* do in the White House?"

"I will organize a demon*stra*tion, *hombre*," Jesús "Eddie" promised him. "Everyone from the local MALDEF and LULAC chapters in Albuquerque, and others, will show up, for sure."

Later that morning, when AveMaria had taken her Prozac and Contracepción was away shopping at the mall in Los Lunas with her girlfriend Luz, who had a driver's license, Héctor took a walk round his yard. The shock he'd received that morning had worn off, leaving a deep depression in its place. This thing that had happened to him was incomprehensible, he felt. As his eyes wandered from one object to another in the vast display of carefully selected and painstakingly arranged lawn ornaments, not one appealed to him in any way as an eyesore but rather as an element of the good taste and cultural enrichment the Villa home represented. Though Héctor had allowed Jesús "Eddie" to depart full of plans for a large demonstration outside the municipal center, the last thing he really wanted was a bunch of noisy demonstrators making a public nuisance of themselves on his behalf, thus calling attention to his shame and public humiliation. As a further consideration, a demonstration might not work: The city fathers might fail to be impressed. How often had he noticed this strange truth about democracy in America: While you might occasionally get the result you wanted at the national level—the reelection of President Bush, for instance—you hardly ever got it at the local one, where everything seemed sewn up tight. The answer to the present crisis, Héctor understood instinctively, did not exist in the political world; he needed to look instead to an alternative arena of hallowed American activity for a solution.

It came to him suddenly, like a fireball in the desert sky overhead, as he stood staring at the old Army Jeep, a relic of World War II, now sprouting sunflowers where the hood used to be. In the toolshed behind the Jeep were his buckets of leftover paint and several squares of fresh plywood. Héctor dragged everything outside and set to work at once with his paintbrushes in the hot sun. Now, perhaps, he could pay off the entire credit-card bill on



Elizabeth Wolf

time and avoid paying interest at eighteen percent.

He worked fast, so that Contracepcíon, returning with Luz from the mall, was greeted by three separate signs, facing in different directions up and down the street and decorated brilliantly in all the brightest colors of Mexico. The Villas of Belen, as the entire city was about to learn, were holding a YARD SALE!!! c

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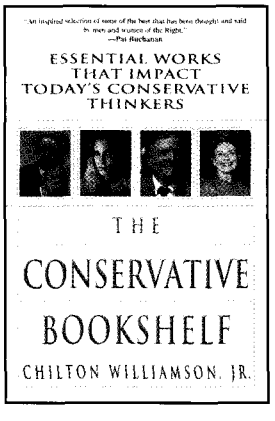

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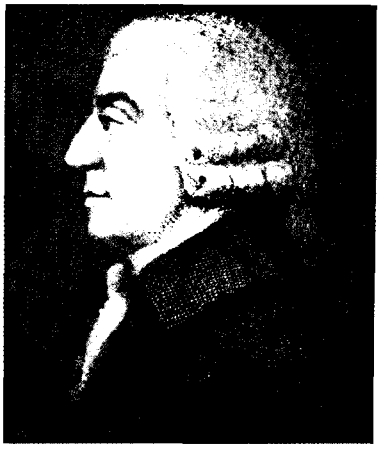

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